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HESTER NEEDHAM'S WORK IN SUMATRA

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'GOD FIRST'

OR

HESTER NEEDHAM'S WORK IN SUMATRA

HER LETTERS AND DIARIES

ARRANGED BY

MARY ENFIELD

WITH A PREFACE BY THE LATE MISS S. G. STOCK

WITH PORTRAIT, MAPS, AND ILLUSTRATIONS FROM SKETCHES BY MISS NEEDHAM, AND PHOTOGRAPHS

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY
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PREFACE

THERE are some to whom this volume will come as a precious legacy[1]. Those who knew and loved the writer of the journals it contains will welcome further details of her life and work. To others—we hope to very many—it will come as a fresh story of the grace of God manifested in His servants, as a fresh glimpse into some of His wonderful working, and as a fresh example of obedience to His call, of joy in His service, and of power in the midst of weakness.

There are many missionary biographies richer in the description of new scenes, and in varied and thrilling incidents, but I venture to think few more remarkable and touching, in its entire simplicity, than the one before us. It is the story of seven years' quiet, patient, hopeful, happy work; and out of the unstudied record of daily life there rises up before us the picture of a character, humble and self-effacing, but strong, powerful, and grand, and a walk in which was fulfilled the Master's promise, 'The works that I do shall he do also.'

In the midst of successful work at home, Miss Needham heard the voice of the great Captain calling her to foreign service, and at once she loyally responded. At the age of forty-six she left home and friends, and went to begin a new life in unknown regions, among a strange people. The Battas of the island of Sumatra, formerly a wild and ferocious race, had been partially evangelized by agents

[1] Two months after this sympathetic Preface was written Miss Stock was herself called home.

of the Rhenish Missionary Society, who commenced work among them in 1861. Twenty-seven years before, two American pioneer missionaries, journeying from the coast to the interior, had been cruelly murdered, and their remains devoured by some of these Battas. The blood thus shed was indeed the seed of the Church in Batta Land. In spite of great dangers and difficulties the German missionaries made their way, and in ten years they occupied as many stations, and had 1,250 converts. The life of Mr. Johannsen, the founder of the station at Pansur-na-pitu (where Miss Needham began first to labour), was more than once threatened, and he was saved by events which the heathen themselves acknowledged to be direct interposition from on high. But of the story of the Batta Mission, Miss Needham was, when she first proposed to go out to Sumatra, entirely ignorant. She went out, like Abraham, 'not knowing whither she went,' fearing nothing, shrinking from nothing, but obediently following the Divine leading.

At first she laboured in connexion with the Rhenish Society, and was the means of initiating a good work among women and girls. And then, in an unevangelized district, where the inhabitants had, forty years before, asked for a Christian teacher, and asked in vain, the glad tidings of the grace of God were proclaimed by a woman unable to rise from the couch on which she was carried, and whose chief helper was a blind and consumptive Christian convert. On the one side weakness, and on the other the power of God!

What will be the eventual fruit of that first preaching of Christ in Great Mandailing we cannot yet tell. God has called home His pioneer messenger. Will He not carry on His work? And who shall have the honour of being His instrument?

SARAH GERALDINE STOCK.

June, 1898.

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In that day the Lord with his strong sword
shall punish that crooked serpent
In that day sing ye unto her A the Lord do keep it
lest any hurt it I will keep it night & day.
Isaiah xxvii. 1

HESTER NEEDHAM'S WORK

IN

SUMATRA

INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR.

Hester Needham, the subject of this memoir and the writer of the subsequent letters, was born January 23, 1843. She was the younger of two sisters, daughters of William Needham, Esq., and Camilla, *née* Bosanquet, and her childhood was spent in happy homes in the country, amidst refinement and comfort, where strict discipline and education and free country pleasures and employments were combined. For a short period she was at school at Weston-super-Mare.

A school-fellow writes of her: 'I *think* I can rejoice that dearest Hester is "gone home" to rest with her loving Saviour. Indeed hers has been a marvellous life, and so full of apparently unswerving faith; and yet, as a girl at school with me she made no profession of religion, and indeed her heart was not then touched, I believe, by God's love.'

She was clever, but not strong, and had to spend some

months once entirely on her back, owing to a weak spine.

Before she was twenty years of age, her only sister married and went to live in Tasmania. Very soon after this, her mother died; so that Hester and her father were left alone together, and for twenty-four years she was his constant faithful companion. They went abroad for two years, travelling about and staying in Italy, where Hester painted a great deal in the picture galleries, enjoying the life very much.

On their way home she was taken ill at Munich with a very dangerous fever, from which she was not expected to recover. But she was mercifully raised up again, and from that time became a different person.

On their return, they took a house in London, and she went out into society a great deal with her father. But she grew rapidly in the Christian life, and side by side with all the social claims she regularly and constantly visited St. George's Hospital, and more and more of such work was added, such as district visiting and Sunday-school teaching, in connexion with her church. A very small branch of the Y.W.C.A. was started by her in 1873, which was the beginning of the Princess House Branch.

For a long time it seemed doubtful which side of Hester's nature would predominate—whether she would be merely the social, artistic, clever, refined lady, or whether, combined with these qualities, she would be the self-denying, devoted, earnest servant of the Master. But steadily and quietly her life became entirely devoted to God. She would hardly ever leave her father in the evenings, arranging her work so that she should always be at hand when he might like her companionship.

In September, 1874, Mr. Needham and Hester went for a long voyage to Tasmania and back, round by the Cape, to visit his other daughter and her family. They were away

for eight months. On these voyages Hester spent nearly all her time in work on board, having Bible classes and prayer-meetings for children, firemen, seamen, second-class passengers, &c. She wrote: 'All these meetings, with many private prayers and quiet talks with those of all classes, was our machinery, and the blessing of God was over all, which caused it to prosper. . . . These meetings were not held without opposition, but I, individually, was wonderfully spared from knowing the extent of the bitter feeling. I used to pass through the furnace, without knowing till afterwards that it was a furnace.'

Hester and her father reached England again on April 23, 1875. She felt that she owed all the power, and the opportunities for work, and the blessing during those months, under God, to the many constant prayers that were offered; and on her return, whenever she gave any account of the voyages, it was simply to encourage others to pray, and to show forth God's readiness to answer.

Soon after she got home, a great work was put into her heart to be done. She felt more strongly than ever the need of temperance, and she longed that the neighbouring gin palace, the Rose and Crown, Knightsbridge, might be transformed into a coffee tavern, with lodgings for men. She and her servants met for prayer daily in her kitchen for months, and many others united in prayer, till friends and funds were raised up, and the thing was done. This was a work of the greatest interest to her.

She did not rest here, but turned her thoughts to the young women in the neighbourhood. She had regularly visited the workrooms in the shops, and knew of the need for a restaurant for young women, and a place where they might be received. So again the daily prayers began, together with effort and thought, and before very long, in 1878, a house in Brompton Road was found, which has ever since been known as the Princess House. This became

the home of her branch of the Y.W.C.A., and to this home she gave her heart and life for eleven years, with fruit that will be known only in eternity.

A large mission room was built in the back garden, and was constantly used for meetings, whilst the house was fitted up as a restaurant for women, and with sleeping accommodation for a good number. This Princess House was Hester's daily work and interest. The early 7 a.m. Sunday morning prayer-meeting, the large Sunday afternoon Bible class of 100 to 200, and the organization of daily classes of various kinds; the personal influence over, and sympathy with, every one whom she could reach; her strict, methodical, punctual supervision of every smallest matter in the house; the very highest spiritual tone in everything concerning the Princess House;—all this, combined with constant prayer and excellent organization, made the whole work and life there very remarkable.

At the same time she was always at hand for her father, and was unwearied in her loving devotion. It is a most striking testimony to the power of her life, and of the influence she exerted, that, a few years before his death, Mr. Needham voluntarily became a total abstainer; and later still he gave up smoking, although it had been his constant habit through a long life. These two facts speak loudly as to Hester's unconscious influence.

In April, 1886, his long life here ended, and Hester soon left the house where they had lived together for many years, and took the house adjoining the Princess House, so that the work there might be extended. She occupied two rooms, using all the rest of the house in connexion with the work. 'God First' was the motto over her fireplace, and it was more and more visibly the motto of her life. The whole of her time and powers and means could now be given to the work amongst her sisters, and her little room was open at all hours to any who came for sympathy

and prayer and advice. Her Princess House life cannot be better described than by giving the recollections and thoughts of two of those who lived there, and with whom she was very closely connected :—

'Speaking of Miss Needham's work at the Princess House from 1883 to 1889, it was simply one continuous stream of blessing and consequent growth. Her devotion and thoroughness in every minute detail was a constant stimulus and example to all who had the privilege of working under her. She had a marvellous power of impressing others with the importance of little things. Everything was prayed over. In her life two things were combined—prayerfulness and practical ability. These made her a born leader, and one to whom all could look up; her preaching and practice thoroughly agreed. She would never ask others to do anything which she herself would avoid. She was justice itself.

'In 1883 she took fresh steps in regard to the winter services of song, and changed them from being partly sacred, partly secular, making them wholly sacred, desiring to win souls and glorify God in this way; and she would only have converted singers in this service. She remarked to one of her workers, "I am determined to have only consecrated singers in this work, even if we only start the service with you and me." But God did not allow this, as He used her to bring home the truth to many hearts, and she was upheld by a band of singing and praying sisters till she left. These services of song were a marked feature of her work; she arranged them herself, taking different lives out of the Bible, and illustrating them by selections from various musical composers. She would press home the truth at these meetings in great power, and souls were converted and blessed.

'Her Sunday Bible class, which began in her dining-room in Montpelier Square with ten, grew so large that the

mission room was too small for it. After Mr. Needham's death she removed to 108 Brompton Road, adjoining the Princess House, and thus she had the power of building in the garden and adding to the mission room. The old room held 150, the new one 300. Miss Needham had a most impressive meeting at the opening of this enlarged room, at which several of the clergy and ministers from surrounding churches and chapels were present.

'She had a strong objection to being praised. Once, on taking her choir to sing at the opening of an institute for working girls, at the close of the meeting the people began to clap. A look of pain came on her face, and turning to the leader of the choir, who knew her wishes well, she commenced singing, "Praise God, from whom *all* blessings flow," thus effectually stopping any thanks to herself.

'She started a teachers' band among her members, from which the surrounding Sunday schools were from time to time supplied.

'Her wonderful *punctuality* enabled her to get through personally a great amount of work. She herself started every fresh work—the flower mission, public-house visitation, arranging plans for reaching the girls at the Exhibition at South Kensington, all nights of prayer and praise, visiting the sick; in all she led the way. She believed in consecrating every moment to the service of the Lord, consequently no moments were allowed to be frittered away.

'On her removal to Brompton Road, she had a consecration service held in every room of the house, and even on the staircase, dedicating all to the service of God.

'After an all night of *praise*, she remarked that there must be some outlet for such a time of spiritual enjoyment. The same day a lady asked her to help in supplying workers for a mission in one of the poorest parts of Walworth. She at once consented, and went herself, with one of her workers, to live for a month in two little rooms in one of

the worst streets there, and carried on a girls' club, mothers' meetings, &c., taking her share of the housework, which all the workers did for themselves [1].

'It was Miss Needham, under God, who made the Princess House a training ground for many workers who are now in the home or foreign field. She never spared herself, and she never believed in any Christian saying *I cannot*; "I *can* do all things through Christ" was her constant motto and exhortation to others. A verse of a hymn she wrote for one of the services of song expresses her feelings:

> '"Through fire, if need be, to refine,
> Lord, spare me not, but make me shine
> I want no other will but Thine:
> Thy will be done."

'She was always ready to admit when she was wrong, which is not an easy thing for a strong character, especially to those under them. After one of the special missions held at the Princess House, she came in one evening and kissed some of the workers—to their astonishment, for Miss Needham was not at all demonstrative; and as she and one of her helpers were driving in a cab to take a meeting that same evening, Miss Needham asked her if she was surprised at her action, and explained that during the mission the Lord had shown her that she lacked love to her fellow creatures, so she at once did her best to alter, and trusted Jesus to work it in her. She always met each worker for half an hour's prayer every week, to pray over the different work, and she *never once forgot*.'

Another friend writes:—

'I feel very much impressed that a special point ought to be made of dear Miss Needham's *life of prayer*. No one knew much better than I did what that life was, which I always felt was only the outcome of *very much secret*

[1] This Walworth work was continued regularly, workers going in turn for a month at a time from the Princess House.

prayer with the Father. As long as I can remember, she had prayer with each of her servants once a week, on a set day and set time, when she herself prayed, and expected the one with her also to engage in prayer. The same also may be said of each of the workers in connexion with these two houses and the mission room. Also I never knew any one go for an interview without her having prayer with them and for them, and looking for them to take part also, *audibly*. As each one joined here as a member of the Y.W.C.A., it was also her rule to make a note of their birthday, that she might remember them each *specially* on that particular day as each year came round. I am sure this simple praying life was the secret of all her power and success in God's work, because everything she touched, as well as every one with whom she came in contact, was, if we may say so, just steeped in prayer.'

Another very dear friend writes :—

'My first acquaintance with Hester Needham began in 1877. We were associated in various little bits of work, and I soon found what a head she had for organization and business, and how very methodical she was. Never allowing unpunctuality or non-fulfilment of engagements in herself, she had no pity on others who transgressed in this way. She was a singularly gifted woman, with a keen sense of humour, and a vein of sarcasm running through her which often served her in good stead in her work. But what must have most impressed those with whom she lived, and for whom she laboured, was her absolute devotion to her Heavenly King, and her fearless witness for Him, no matter what it cost her [1]. Prayer was her very life; her faith in God's love and wisdom almost unlimited. An intense and yearning love filled her heart towards those for whom Christ died, and it was impossible to be in her company, or to read her letters, without feeling that her

[1] Physical courage also was a marked feature in her character,

one desire was to "lay down her life" for others, even as "Christ had laid down His life" for her. The more I knew her, the more I realized that "the Spirit of God dwelt in her richly," and was indeed her teacher and guide in all she did. It was an inspiration to know her, and her burning words have fired many cold hearts, and her beautiful life of absolute devotion and unselfishness led many to desire to live for God's glory and the good of others.'

She was so entirely devoted to the work given her by God, that she could hardly be induced to take any holiday, or to allow herself the indulgence of rest, and if she did go away, she was still ever about her Father's business; ever on the watch amongst relatives, friends, servants, village people, as to how she might be the means of help or comfort to them, or how she might speak for her Master. She had an intense love of nature, and when, at rare intervals, she was in the country for a day or two, she appreciated the beauty so fully as to show the reality of her consecration, which enabled her to be *perfectly* satisfied and happy in London streets and slums, or in whatever place the Lord her God should choose for her.

In the midst of all this most full and useful and blessed work, herself, under God, the centre of so very much and beloved by so very many, she began to be strongly impressed that God was calling her to go elsewhere. But it was some months before it was shown to her whither He would send her.

At the close of a large public meeting on April 11, 1889, a small pamphlet was put into the hand of each one on leaving. This was a letter from Miss Barclay on her way out to China as a missionary, and in it she mentioned some place in Sumatra, which forty years before had asked for Christian teaching, and to which all these years no answer had gone. Before twenty-four hours had passed, Hester

had said 'Yes' to the call, though what or where the place was, or under what Society she could go, she knew not. She wrote the following to the Princess House members:—

'*Saturday, April* 13, 1889.

'Dear Friends,—There is a place in Sumatra "where for *forty years* the heathen have been asking for a missionary . . . and none has gone, and now the Mohammedans are going, but no missionary of Christ!" This came to me as a call last Thursday, and this day I have written to offer myself for the work, possibly at the end of next September. My love for the Princess House, for All Saints' parish, and for Walworth has not grown less; but the love of Christ, which is far deeper, constrains me, and I cannot consent to see His holy Name so dishonoured. I may not be of much use personally, but it may make it easier for others to go. "Thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over" (Isaiah li. 23), and it will be a great joy if such a beginning be made as shall induce more competent missionaries to follow. It is now the subject of my earnest prayer and effort to find a successor for the Princess House. Your affectionate friend,

'Hester Needham.'

After much inquiry she found the country was under Dutch control, and missionaries had been sent out by the Rhenish Mission at Barmen, in Germany, though not to *Mandailing*, the district in question. She went to Barmen and offered herself, and was accepted as an honorary missionary. Of this visit she writes:—

'During my visit to the Barmen Mission, the fountain head of very much work, it was easy to see that of all their foreign stations in Africa, China, Java, Borneo, Sumatra, &c., the last named was their pet child, and the extraordinary success of the work there would account for the

sympathy it has called forth. In that place, far more than in any other, there has been a need for single ladies, to work among the *converted* native women and girls, as they have necessarily little opportunity of learning what the Christian life really is. This need has been the subject of much prayer, the difficulty being that it is contrary to the habits of the Germans to employ single ladies, and yet the missionaries' wives cannot add this to the pressure of work already on their hands. Consequently a German lady could hardly be expected to lead the way; but Dr. Schreiber hopes that I shall only be the first of very many who shall enter this special field. Last year, at Pansur-na-pitu (my destination), hundreds of converts came daily to church from March till June, for spiritual instruction, and in June 309 were baptized, amongst whom were some who had been ringleaders in opposition to Christianity. There is also a seminary to train native Christians as pastors and teachers, but hardly anything has as yet been done for the continued spiritual instruction of the women and girls. There are two married missionaries at Pansur-na-pitu, Mr. Johannsen and Mr. Meerwaldt, and, at any rate for the first few months, I shall probably be living with Mr. and Mrs. Johannsen. 'H. N.'

On her return to England she paid final visits to Walworth and also to her relatives, and wound up everything at the Princess House, where she spent the last two months before September 30.

In September she wrote to the members:—

'Dear Friends,—Some of you have been asking for my photograph. I cannot help thinking you may unconsciously have bought it for a shilling, but failed to recognize the likeness, because the face was turned the other way! Is not this what we need to be reminded of? Though the

face of our earthly friend is hidden from us, the Saviour, to whom that friend is clinging, becomes ever more and more real, to the purifying and strengthening of our souls. "To depart and to be with Christ." Yours "till death us do" *join*,

'HESTER NEEDHAM.'

This refers to a beautiful picture which had been painted according to her design the previous year: a copy of the photograph taken from it is at the beginning of this memoir. In describing the picture she says: 'The picture shows the true position of sin, *under Christ's foot*, and the true position of the Christian soldier, *in His arms*. It shows the risen or carried life, escaping all the rough stones by the way. It also shows the life hid with Christ; not a feature of the child's face can be seen, and she can only be recognized by the intensity of her clinging, and the One to whom she is clinging.—H. N.'

Hester prepared to leave, with the full purpose of heart to live and die amongst the Battas, to wear the native dress and throw in her lot with them, and never to return to England. She held the closing Bible class, and had the Holy Communion for the last time in her beloved church, All Saints, and on September 30, 1889, with hymns and flowers, and a loving, sorrowing crowd of her friends to bid her good-bye, she set off from Victoria Station for Germany, and thence, a month later, in company with other missionaries, she sailed for Sumatra.

This departure was no easy thing to her—she often spoke of it as 'the day of her death'—and though outwardly sustained and bright, no one knows what the wrench was to her.

This little memoir shall be closed with another extract from one of the friends whose words are already quoted:—

'And so the work went on growing and prospering, till the final scene at Victoria Station at 9.30 a.m. on September 30, 1889, when a large number of Y.W.C.A. members of the Princess House, and factory girls from Walworth, workers and personal friends, gathered at the station to bid farewell to her, who by her life and teaching had been the means of everlasting blessing and help to them. Her last act in the Princess House was, as she laid down that work which was so dear to her, at the command of God, to stand at the last moment surrounded by her workers and others, and to join in singing "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow," and then pass out and enter the carriage which conveyed her to the station.

'This is the last prayer she prayed in the mission room of the Princess House, as she knelt *alone* to speak to her Lord for the last time in that sacred spot (it was found on her chair after she had left):—

'"Heavenly King, here and now, I thank Thee with a deep unspeakable thanksgiving for all that this room has been to me, and to so many. I thank Thee for the faithful band of saints and soldiers that Thou hast raised up to work in this place, for all their incomprehensible love and forbearance towards me, and for all the lessons of pure-hearted devotion they have been daily teaching me. Grant me by Thy grace to be all that they imagine that I am, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

'"Loving Father, hear and answer my last prayer, in the name of Jesus, in this room, on this platform, and in this place.

'"Pour out Thy Spirit from on high, that Thy children here may resist even unto blood, striving against sin, and may be willing to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire, and may they rest in Thy love and be at peace.

'"*September* 30, 1889."'

MAP OF SUMATRA.

CHAPTER I

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF COUNTRY AND PEOPLE

'The Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.'—JOSHUA i. 9.

Maha Vaurunhus, Dec. 8, 1889.—We are coasting from Padang to Siboga. We are always in sight of the beautiful coast of Sumatra on our right, and have touched at three places, or rather stopped whilst boats have come out to bring more passengers and exchange bundles of goods; and this is a very slow process which occupies hours.

Siboga, Dec. 10.—The ship arrived here soon after 10 p.m. on Sunday, but no boats came out to us. On Monday

morning it poured with rain, but happily cleared up by the time Mr. Schrey, the Siboga missionary, came on board to meet us. After landing it was about half an hour's walk to the mission station at Siboga, so it is a good thing there was neither rain nor sunshine, and the scenery was exquisitely beautiful; mountains and palm-trees, and rice fields, and native houses, and a noisy brook rushing over large stones, and little wooden bridges. Soon the road became a tiny path with long grass on each side, and then appeared the house and school, and a shed full of Battas (the natives of this part of Sumatra), who were preparing wood to build a church. It so happens that Mr. Meerwaldt from Pansur-na-pitu is here just now, and on Thursday he will be ready to escort me there.

To-day, for the first time, I have put on a *saron* and *cabaja*[1]. I find them so practical and cool and delightful, that for my own pleasure, setting aside all principle, I should be very glad never again to wear anything else. The bath-house here is something to remember, also the splendid system of drainage which accompanies it. The bath-house is several yards away from the house, on the side of a mountain, and over a running stream, so the bath is continually self-filled and self-emptied, and then this stream modestly runs underground and is lost to view. The stream is brought through a trough which is about as high as my chin, so it can be a shower-bath or otherwise, according to fancy, and people bathe here generally once a day at least.

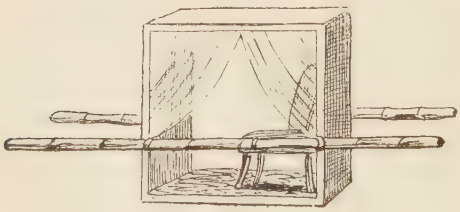
Yesterday morning, about twenty Batta Christians assembled in the back room to greet us; so we brought out

[1] Native skirt and jacket.

our best Batta for their benefit, and a Batta nurse-girl delights in telling me the names of everything in Batta. There are most beautiful and unknown flowers here, one especially large pink one, which they use in Padang for cleaning boots; and beautiful unknown fruits. Nothing could be nicer than the food here. First, we fill our plates with rice, and then pile them up with bits of fowl or duck, and all imaginable sorts of vegetables and sauces; and for puddings we have pineapples, bananas, and *papajas*, which are something like melons, only much nicer.

Dec. 11.—To-day I visited the school with Mr. Meerwaldt. We found the native teacher with fourteen boys, doing sums on slates. Mr. Meerwaldt made the older boys read a New Testament history, each a bit in turn, and questioned them on it, and I could understand quite enough to make it interesting. At ten o'clock the children went out for half an hour's play, while the teacher stayed and had a long talk, and I sat by. I was much pleased to find, from the reading, that I shall not have a great deal to *un*learn in the way of pronunciation. Girls do not come to school, as they have the babies to mind, and the men are rather afraid of their learning too much.

Pansur-na-pitu, Dec. 16, *Monday.*—We arrived here safe and well and thankful about 5 p.m. on Saturday, and found a beautiful, wonderful welcome, and I already feel quite at home here. On Friday, 13th, at 5.30 a.m., we left Siboga—Mr. Meerwaldt (who lives at this station), Mr. Young (one of the three new mission-



aries), and I; they on horseback, and I in a chair slung on two bamboo poles.

Every inch of the road to Silindung was magnificent scenery, and the weather perfect the whole way, and I would gladly have travelled twice the distance. I had sixteen men for myself alone, and if all my Southampton boxes had not been left behind at Padang, I should probably have wanted eighteen more. I had four men to carry the chair, with a relay to take their place, and eight more men for my luggage, six things.

Our road zigzagged up and down the mountains, but of course chiefly up, and the men walked so near the edge, that sometimes on looking out I could see nothing below me but the bottom of a deep valley—a most peculiar feeling, something like walking by faith and not by sight! The chair was very comfortable (especially when the men happened to keep step).

About every two hours we stopped, either for the men to eat their rice, or for us to eat something, when we rambled about and admired the scenery. It was glorious to catch sight of the sea just at sunrise, as we turned round the side of a mountain, and we heard birds something like thrushes singing, and monkeys screaming and chattering in the forest. There were palms and ferns and flowers, and brooks and little wooden bridges; and at 2 p.m. we stopped for good at a wooden house. Next morning at 6 a.m. we started again. I had very little opportunity of speaking to the men who carried me, but I sang two Batta hymns for their benefit, and some English ones for my own, and I found they were Christian men, baptized here. At noon we entered the lovely valley of Silindung—two rivers and a grand cascade, rice fields covering the bottom of the valley like a golden green carpet, blue mountains all around, and little groups of palm-trees denoting a village.

We were to stop at Pea Radja, a mission station, for dinner, and I was the first to arrive. Before seeing the house, I heard the brass band playing a hymn in welcome, and a crowd of native Christian men were assembled to receive us. Mrs. Mohri, the hostess, was most kind; but there were about eight white people, so of course I could not tell one from another. It was only as we sat at table that it dawned upon me that Mr. Johannsen must be sitting opposite to me[1]. It seems he had come so far to meet us. After coffee we started again for the last hour and a half of our journey, staying a few minutes at Simarangkir, another mission station, Mr. Johannsen coming with us on horseback.

I soon found that we were getting among native friends, as some young men helped my four men who were carrying my chair. Then we began to talk to each other a little, and smiled, and laughed, and I heard the words *England*, *London*, *Britannia*! Then we talked a little about Christ as our King and Friend and Saviour, and they told me their names, Samuel, Peter, and Luke.

At last we reached this station, where the verandah was decorated with flowers, and there was a palm-leaf arch. Mrs. Johannsen was there outside, ready to give me a most motherly welcome. It is really wonderful to think of God's goodness in having led me to this station; it is evidently full of life, and the Bible reading and prayer after each of the three meals is no mere form, but full of life and earnestness.

On Sunday morning, before church, a crowd of women and children assembled in the back verandah to say 'How do you do?' and I must certainly have shaken hands with more than fifty, and if I came away for a few minutes, I was always called back, as some more had come, and the first ones had to clear out to make room for them.

[1] The missionary with whom she was going to live.

The church was splendidly filled, perhaps six or seven hundred people, and Mr. Johannsen preached first on the Epistle, and then on the Gospel for the day, walking up and down the aisle, and questioning the people so as to make them understand.

Almost directly after dinner, there was Sunday school in the church; the thirty-five students belonging to the seminary on one side, and perhaps 150 children on the other. After singing and prayer, a student spoke to them all, explaining a Bible story and questioning them on it. Then more singing, and then they filed off into classes, the students being the teachers, and Mr. and Mrs. Johannsen the superintendents. I was quite absorbed with thirteen small ones, who had a hymn to learn, and were all sitting on the floor, and I was following the words in my hymn book, and thinking it was not so difficult, when Mr. Johannsen came up and separated off six and brought them up to me; so there I was on my first Sunday in Sumatra, with a class of six.

After coffee came the afternoon service in church. There was a fair congregation, but not nearly so large as in the morning. All the day long people were coming and going, wanting to see Mr. Johannsen about something or other. He was called out quite early to visit a chief who was supposed to be dangerously ill: but that same chief called on us the same afternoon! His brother is blind, and is named Bartimeus, and is a great helper in the work. More than twenty years ago he helped to teach Mr. Johannsen the Batta language, and now he is helping me a little; and on Sunday he pondered for a whole hour (or, I believe it was in the night) on the wonderful fact that the love of Christ had brought me out all alone from England, and he has been preaching about it to some of the chiefs and others! His eldest little girl was one of my pupils.

Our Sunday wound up with our going to visit Mr. and

Mrs. Meerwaldt, and their three little children, who live close by. The two families visit each other alternately on Sundays, and have Bible reading together, alternately in Dutch and German. . . .

It is a good thing that Dr. Schreiber and Mr. Stewart were both so strong on the point of my lying down for two hours daily, as otherwise I don't think I should ever have had the courage to speak of it, seeing the others do not seem to rest much. That first Sunday it was impossible, but now it is all made easy; and indeed things may well be easy with any one so kind, and simple, and sweet-tempered as Mrs. Johannsen, and she has many difficulties to contend with.

My 'little' bedroom, as they call it, is 17 feet by 13 feet, and 12 feet high! It is made of rough planks, and when the shutter and the door are both shut, I can still see the time by my watch by the light which comes through the walls, roof, and floor! I have a splendid large table of unpainted wood for my books, lamp, writing and work, and a large cupboard with plenty of shelves; and as there are already two beds in it, the one I brought from Barmen is put away in an outhouse. I have also a washstand, bookshelves, three chairs, and plenty of nails for hanging things on. I have not had the courage to unpack my little polished, black, folding-up table, as it would be too utterly incongruous in this house; and I don't know what my davenport will think when it arrives and sees its companions! There is not a shadow of a carpet anywhere; not even the reed mats that we had in Siboga and Padang.

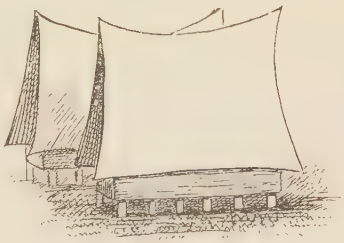
Our three Bible readings are most interesting. After breakfast we have begun St. Matthew in German, after dinner the Psalms in Batta, and after supper Isaiah in German, and I am always made to be the reader. First I read the psalm through, then Mr. Johannsen reads a verse at a time, I after him, translating it with Bible and

dictionary always at hand. In the evening he reads an interesting German book on *The Holy Life.*

Natives keep coming and going all day long, and a group of them has been sitting at one end of the verandah for the last two hours, while I have been writing at the other. I am also learning the Commandments and Luther's Catechism in Batta, and there is plenty to do.

Dec. 17.—Yesterday it rained all day, and Mr. Johannsen asked if I could see five women under umbrellas in the rice fields. I said, 'No,' believing I saw only a small village, when lo, the village began to move! I think these umbrellas are made of palm-leaves.

Every day, about noon, the children, all boys, come out from school, and assemble before the front gallery to say '*Tabe*,' which is '*Good-day*.' There are about seventy or eighty; and they file off, ten at a time, in marching order.



The native huts are in sight of this window, like this.

Dec. 21.—Anna is our little brown servant, about ten years old, whose sleeping-place is a mat on the floor, and who eats her rice on the floor while we have our supper.

Two women come here four mornings a week to learn to read, and yesterday, after Mrs. Johannsen had prayed and

sung with them, she left them to me; so there I was again with a class, two women and their three children!

Sunday, Dec. 29, 1889.—I am very busy from morning to night, chiefly in learning Batta. Mr. Johannsen is extremely anxious that I should get on with it fast, and pours out upon me unlimited patience and pains. The other morning he shut me up in the lumber-room behind the church with five of the students, to teach them to paint a text like the one I had on board ship. I chose a simpler, shorter one to begin with, and they all did it first on their slates—'Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not' (1 John iii. 6). This must have taken more than an hour; then I dismissed them with the present of a piece of paper each. In the afternoon we met again, and in the meantime they had drawn it out in pencil. Then the painting began, and I had only five brushes of very different sizes; but we managed somehow, and after about two hours they were all finished wonderfully well, and it was most interesting, though, of course, rather silent. Mr. Johannsen was there for a little while, and began it with prayer; and Mrs. Johannsen paid us a visit, and I got her to say to them a few words about the text, which I was quite incapable of doing.

There are thirty-five students altogether. They are young unmarried men, native Christians, and are here for four years' training in the seminary to be teachers. They have a little wooden house to sleep in, another to study in during their spare hours, and another to cook in. They pay nothing, but have to find their own food and clothing. Last Monday their Christmas holidays began, and that is how they came to have time for painting. Now they are all dispersed to their own homes. Last Monday and Christmas Eve they were decorating the church

Christmas Day was delightful, and the weather hot and lovely. After breakfast and before church, Mrs. Johannsen

and I went to a little village close by (it was the first walk I had taken since coming here, so it was especially nice) to visit a family who had the leprosy—not an incurable kind—and to take them a Christmas parcel.

First we saw the chief of the village and a little crowd of people, and Mrs. Johannsen talked with them, and he sent for a chair and a stool, that we might sit down in the shade—the chiefs seem mostly to possess one chair—and he said how discontented his people were, and that they were threatening to leave the village because of this leper family; but their house was quite separate from the others, and the father and mother and children stood outside whilst we talked to them and gave them the parcel and some bananas.

The church was grandly full for morning service, and in the afternoon there was 'Sunday' school and another service, and we gave the children fruit, and then went to the Meerwaldts, as they had a Christmas tree, with presents for their three children and for the students. Finally, here, after supper, the students all came, and Mr. Johannsen gave them each a pocket-handkerchief, comb, or something equivalent.

The next morning there was church service, and I think a good many more than three hundred people must have been present.

There are some palm-wine palms in this garden; and one day I saw the man who attends to them climb up with an empty bamboo vessel, and bring down a full one. The sap runs out of a slit that is cut, and when it is a little boiled it makes treacle, which we have every day for breakfast and supper; a little more boiling makes it into toffy, which we don't want; a little more still makes it into coarse brown sugar, which we don't use ourselves, but the natives use. Without any boiling they drink it as palm wine, and I have tasted it, but do not like it.

SARONS.

1. The most usual way.
2. When one arm is cold.
3. To carry the baby.
4. As an only garment.
5. As an umbrella on a windy day.
6. In cold weather.
7. Dropped while writing.
8. Flung over one arm.

There are two hedges of lovely pink roses in this garden which flower all the year round; and French beans, which are sown every fortnight, so that we can have them all the year round; and there are a few carrots, and potatoes and spinach, and any amount of a very nice kind of cucumber; and coffee they have too, and lemons and oranges—only it is not hot enough, or something or other goes wrong which makes them not ripen well. And there is a cocoa-nut palm, but it is not hot enough for it to bring forth cocoa-nuts.

Some of the little boys who come to church carry their clothes over their arm for convenience sake; others twist them round their necks; others leave their clothes at home; while others wear little caps, jackets and trousers, and probably a *saron* besides. Men, women, and children delight in wearing at least one *saron*, as it is by no means necessary to wear it only as a skirt. Sometimes they carry their children in them, but at any rate they are always hitching them about in all sorts of ways, and sometimes they use them as sacks to carry things in from the market.

CHAPTER II

ACTIVE WORK

January 8 to August 31, 1890.

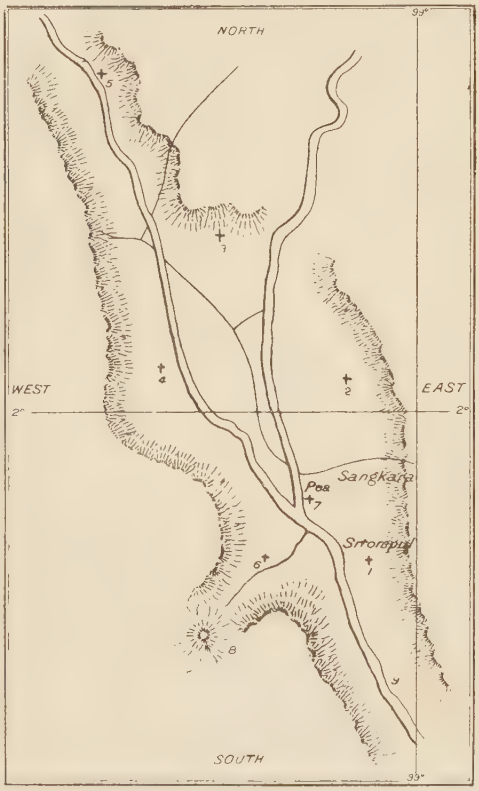
'Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.'—Exodus iv. 12.

Pansur-na-pitu, Jan. 8, 1890.—This is a very important week for me, as my work has begun in earnest. The district is divided into four quarters, and the women and girls from each have been invited to come in turn, attended by their respective elder, to make my acquaintance. About thirty came on Monday, and on Tuesday and to-day; and the remainder are to come on Monday next. We meet in the schoolroom at the back of the church. I was left alone with them for the best part of an hour, to sing, or pray, or read, or speak, as the Spirit gave me utterance, and I am indeed most truly thankful for the way in which I was helped through that difficult work.

Also, on Wednesday some of the students came with *their mothers*. We sang 'Come to the Saviour' in Batta, and I read Matt. v. 8, and 1 John i. 7–9, all about *cleansing*; and showed them my painted sketch of an arbutus, done years ago; and then with a dirty sponge disfigured it with dirty dabs, and said how sins (naming three special ones) spoiled our life or heart. Just then, happily, Mr. Johannsen came in and took up the subject, and made it all perfectly

clear that it was an illustration of a sin-stained heart,—so much pains taken to make it beautiful and just like the great original pattern, but, unlike the picture, it was not irremediably spoilt. Mr. Johannsen unblushingly says he

1. Pansur-na-pitu. Mr. Johannsen.
2. Simarangkir. Mr. Kessel.
3. Huta Barat. Mr. Pöse.
4. Pea Radja. Mr. Mohri.
5. Sipoholon. Mr. Culemann.
6. Banna Rea. Pandita Johannes, a native pastor.
7. Pea. Chapel-of-ease in this district under Mr. Meerwaldt. The churches—all of them, I think—are used as boys' schools during the week.
8. Dolok (Mount), Mertimbang.
9. River 'Batang Toru.'



VALLEY OF SILINDUNG.

is throwing me into the sea to teach me to swim, which is obviously the case.

Six native teachers with their families have just arrived for an eighteen months' preparation for ordination, and

I shall probably be teaching the wives for an hour daily, so you can imagine how much I shall have to *learn* between, and how difficult it is to keep to my two hours' rest daily; in fact, on Sundays I cannot have it, and do not want it.

Bartimeus, the blind brother of one of the chiefs, is become my teacher. He makes a little livelihood by selling things on commission for the Dutch soldiers, which is by no means a nice occupation, so now he has entirely given that up, and belongs, as it were, to me, beginning with to-day, though of course I do not really want him nearly all day long. It is a delightful arrangement for both parties, as he is a true-hearted worker and preacher, and was a great help to me this morning in the church room with the women, sitting by my side, and starting the hymns, and taking the first prayer.

An old man called the other day, and would not go away until he had seen 'his mother' to wish her 'Good-bye'—meaning me! and when a woman speaks to her child, she calls him 'dear *father* or *grandfather*'!

Drawn from memory, not from life, nor, alas, from death.

Jan. 12.—For three evenings I have seen just such a spider as this in my bedroom, but could never succeed in putting him to death, as he ran so fast, and now I hear he is to be cherished, and not murdered, as he is supposed to eat up insects still more venomous than himself.

It is very nice to be among a primitive people with very few wants. For instance, it would be difficult to find a suitable present for the brown dot of a servant girl. She does not wear stockings or shoes or collar or hat or gloves, and she cannot write, and she already has a workbox, and

her bed is a mat laid on the floor, and she sits on the floor in this room while we sit at the table.

Jan. 19.—Last Wednesday was my second meeting of the mothers of the students, and most unexpectedly to myself, Mr. Johannsen and about twenty of the students were also present, and I can only thank God that He enabled me to speak before them all. As every one here has a rice field, I took the subject of *rice* in its four stages: 1st, with the husk; 2nd, after the husk is loosened by pounding; 3rd, after the husk is winnowed away; and 4th, after it is cooked. And Mr. Johannsen most kindly let me have a grinding block and a 'fan' to make an object lesson of it, and also some cooked rice; and a man went through the whole process there and then to show me, and to arrest the attention of the women. Then I spoke to them of 1st, *man* in his sinful state (Rom. iii. 12); 2nd, in a low state of conversion, hating but not forsaking sin (Rom. vii. 19); 3rd, the real thing (Rom. vi. 22); and 4th, those who through fiery trials are made ready for the kingdom (Rev. vii. 14; 1 Pet. iv. 12), ending with the question, 'Where are you?' . . .

Jan. 26.—Thursday last, my birthday, I extracted permission from Mr. Johannsen to go with Bartimeus and one of the students to visit a leprous girl who lives by herself in a little hut, half an hour's walk from here. Though raining the whole time, and the road bad beyond words to describe, it was a most delightful expedition; but my boots were so saturated with the water, that not only could I hardly get them off, but what is far worse, I cannot as yet put them on again, seeing they have gone all stiff, so I think next time I must go barefoot, like the others.

We sang bits of hymns by the way, and sang and read, and talked and prayed with the girl, as she sat just inside her little hut, and we stood (soaked to the skin) just outside. About a hundred yards from the hut, on our way there, they stopped, saying, 'We always have a prayer here.'

This was the boundary, beyond which the world would not come, and she might not come; and those two go separately, each once a week, to take her rice (she is supported by the mission), and read with her. At this boundary they also put on slippers, as there is an idea that leprosy is conveyed through the earth! She is, I believe, now a Christian, and has lived there two years, but is not yet baptized.

The women here are not, as a rule, nice-looking. Some of them have all their teeth pulled out for appearance sake, and some have them blackened for the same reason; and those who chew betel have their mouths all red as if they were bleeding; and some of them, after unhitching their babies, are bare from the waist upward, and sit on the floor with long bare legs stretched out towards me.

This week my work has been five Bible classes, about thirty present each time; the six teachers' wives being present at them all. It was most interesting, and one day I found the hour was over without my having had to ask Bartimeus to speak, which showed progress; but though I can so far talk and read, I can hardly understand anything of what the people say.

Feb. 9.—My work this last week has been better arranged. Instead of four separate parties of women, they have merged into two, and come Tuesday and Friday, leaving Monday and Thursday for a girls' meeting—for girls little and big. About sixty have come, and are left on my hands for the first half-hour for singing, prayer, Bible reading, &c.; then Mrs. Johannsen comes in, and after a little general teaching they get divided off into classes, and there are a few grown-ups (including me), who act as teachers, and the whole mass of them either learn their letters or learn to read, and the whole thing lasts nearly two hours. This is a new and delightful work, as, so far, only boys come to the school, and the master has quite enough on his hands with them.

The parents are much pleased, as it is impossible for them to learn to read by only coming to Sunday school.

The other day I had a lovely expedition, i. e. a walk to a village five or six minutes off! For such a wonderful event I have to get special permission, which I got in this way. Last Wednesday one of the mothers brought me five eggs as a present, and Mrs. Johannsen asked me what I should like done with them; so, quick as lightning, I answered, 'Oh, if they are really mine, I should like to take them to that leprous family we visited on Christmas Day: couldn't I go this afternoon with Bartimeus?' So they said, 'Yes;' and she sent some rice and bananas too. We had a delightful time with that family, standing with them outside their house. One of the two children has died since Christmas, but the other one and the mother are better, though the man is very bad. I got them to fetch out their Batta Testament, and we read the Beatitudes together (as I had also brought mine), and sang a hymn we knew by heart. I repeated two lines at a time, and then we sang them, blind Bartimeus prompting me when I forgot a word.

Feb. 16.—I had yesterday a more delightful expedition than ever before. The women from a little village twenty minutes from here failed to come to their Friday meeting, so I proposed calling there with Bartimeus, and did so, armed with a Batta Testament, but no hymn-book. Blind Bartimeus started at such a galloping pace that, though I am a very fast walker, I could not keep up with him. As to the mud, I had to be utterly reckless about it, there was so much that it was no use trying to pick my way. Our road at first skirted this beautiful valley of Silindung (which I should say was about the size of London), but presently we had to turn to the left among the rice fields, and go through a stream where the water was well above my ankles; and I did not like to take my

shoes off, as I should hardly have got them on again. Blind Bartimeus offered to carry me on his back, but I took to the water in preference, and as the stream had a muddy bottom, my shoes shipped earth as well as water. Arrived at the village, we found the chief's wife outside her house, weaving a *saron*, so I spoke to her and a few other women, while Bartimeus disappeared inside the house. After a time I called to him to say we must go—when, to my great joy and surprise, he said they were expecting me inside to have a little meeting (the first Batta house in Sumatra I had yet entered); so I climbed the ladder, and found mats laid down, and a little low stool for me. About ten people were there, including the chief and his wife.

I chose a beautiful hymn, which I had just learnt by heart, giving out two lines at a time: then the Lord's Prayer, then I read Eph. v. 14, with its three divisions, *Wake up, arise*, and *Christ shall give thee light*; and I said I was waked up every morning by the church bell, like Christ's voice calling, 'Come unto Me,' but that was not enough, I had to *get up*, and hearing was not enough without *repenting*, and then I had to open my shutter and let in the light from heaven, and let out the darkness—and we must open our hearts to *let in the Holy Spirit of Christ*. They, too, could hear the church bell every Friday, but then they should come when they heard it. Then we sang again one of the verses of the hymn which says, 'Christ woke me from the sleep of death' or indifference. Bartimeus spoke a little, and also the chief, and then we left. We must have been a good half-hour in the village. The house had no window, and consisted only of one room. I do not suppose a white woman had ever visited that village before, but getting to these villages is certainly a difficulty. I have now a small sore place on my foot from the hardness of the shoes, and I really think I must go barefoot next time. It is very remarkable and wonderful

how God is gratifying my love of adventure without my going one inch out of the path of duty.

Feb. 17.—On Thursday we went to Sakaran, a good hour and a half's walk from here, and Mr. Johannsen and two of the teachers came too. Before reaching the village I was obliged to come to a stop, as I was quite lame, so I said, 'I really must take off my left shoe.' Mr. Johannsen saw the necessity of the case, and amicably sanctioned my taking them both off, which I did, and at once felt free, and could walk fast and not lame. It is curious that I always had a hankering to go barefoot, with a fixed idea that I should be able to do it, in spite of all that people of experience said to the contrary! This was a pretty stiff trial trip, with every variety—grass, mud, hard roads, stones, water, and wooden bridges; and I found the grass and mud the nicest, and came home without the faintest bruise or scratch, and not at all tired.

When we got close to our destination, Bartimeus and one of the teachers turned off to go to Sakaran, while Mr. Johannsen and the other teacher branched off to visit three other villages. We had a nice meeting in ours, perhaps thirty people, only it was too dark to see. There was no window, and the door was extremely low, with the roof coming down over it; but there was some light through the floor, as one had to climb a steep ladder to get to it; and there was a *fire* at one end, lighted, I believe, to please us, as this time we were expected. I could just exist by sitting close to the door, and for the first time in Silindung I felt really extra hot! On the previous Friday no women had come to my meeting from any of the three villages which I since visited, but the next day women came from all. However, it would have been quite worth while, even if they had not come. I am certainly the first white woman that has visited them. Mrs. Johannsen has been here twenty years, but she is up to her eyes in work from early

morning till night, and teaches the teachers' wives cooking, washing, writing, needlework, ironing, &c.; so she has not even time to do her own work.

I have got a new class now added to the others. The daughters of the teachers come to me now for half an hour, five dear little brown lambs with large black eyes, and they sit on the floor in the front gallery, and I on a low stool. One of the smallest lambs can say most distinctly, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God.' I feel that even this tiny work is very important, as these are the daughters of future clergymen, and so should set an example to all the other brown little girls.

March 9.—Yesterday, for the first time, I went alone to the village where the leper family live, as Bartimeus was busy with a new daughter, and besides, I did not want him. These lepers seemed very glad to see me, and quite brightened up, and joined nicely in the singing. Coming home, I fell in with five or six friendly men on the way, one of whom seemed to know me quite well, and told one of the others to carry my basket for me, and they waited while I washed my feet in a stream, so as to look respectable when I came in. These walks and meetings in the villages I most thoroughly enjoy. It is such a beautiful way of reaching personally every woman in the district, and so much better, therefore, than if the villages were large. I had a very earnest, interesting talk in the gallery this morning with a woman in whose house I had a meeting the day before yesterday.

March 16.—Punctuality is quite unknown in these regions. I never know within half an hour or an hour when we shall breakfast or dine, and the women are capable of coming more than an hour late to the meetings. This puzzled me a good deal at first, as the meetings are only meant to last an hour, but now it is pretty simple, as I give a daily reading lesson to the six teachers' wives in the same room, so

I can begin with them or end with them, as the case may be, or teach them half an hour before or half an hour after the meeting; but it is still a little puzzling when two or three come quite early, and most of the others an hour late. Even the *sunset* bell has no idea of punctuality, and rings when it is quite light, and sometimes when it is quite dark! This is, however, but a small matter; the one thing is that the message, whenever given, should find an entrance into the hearts of the people, and I was much interested, on Wednesday, in noticing the fixed earnest attention of one woman. After the meeting, when all were dispersed, and I was writing in the gallery, this same woman came and knelt by my side, and said something about her sins, and much that I could not understand. It seems that she told Bartimeus how deeply impressed she was, and that she had never heard such words before; so I thank God for that.

March 23.—It is most wonderfully interesting to see this garden getting fuller and fuller of planks, preparatory to building a large mission room, 40 ft. by 18, for the women and girls, which will probably cost about £100[1]. There will also be a new kitchen built between it and this house, as the old one must be pulled down, and of course I look upon it as a Sumatra Princess House.

Yesterday, just before we started (to visit a village), Mr. Johannsen said he would go with us. There had been a deluge of rain an hour or two before, and our way lay up a clay mountain with sloping kind of half-steps trodden by many climbers. No retinue of bearers could have carried any human being up that path, and I am bound to confess that once I did lose my footing and slip down with my chin, hands, and knees in the mud. Not that there was much *down* about it, seeing we were climbing up at what

[1] This was entirely at Miss Needham's expense.

I will not call an angle of 45°, but at any rate it was very steep. Strange to say, my dress did not get disgracefully muddy, but our six feet were a sight to be seen, and they washed them for us before we climbed the ladder into the chief's house. It was a peculiarly interesting gathering, as the people bore a bad character, many of them being heathen, but all were most quiet and attentive. Mr. Johannsen also spoke a little at the end. The room was swarming with people, probably about forty, though it was too dark to distinguish the brown people in the shadowy corners, and I could hardly see to read two or three texts, so that almost all had to be without book.

Pansur-na-pitu, April 9, 1890.— This house is built on piles, but only about two feet high, so as to prevent the planks rotting on the ground, and to secure ventilation, and to enable people to clear away any dead beasts or kill any live ones that might accumulate there. It is only the native houses that are built so high that horses and buffaloes and pigs can live together underneath; but the villages are quite free from bad smells, notwithstanding the many and various animals that live with the people. The next rainy season comes on in June. I have not seen any tigers or elephants yet, nor even a snake. About ten years ago a tiger killed two dogs in this garden, but now the forests are so much cut down that they have got rather out of reach. A missionary's wife from another part of Sumatra said that a tiger came the other day actually on to the front gallery of the house, and she dare not let the children go out of the house alone, and I believe that was in broad daylight. Mr. Johannsen has not seen an elephant since coming out, but he once saw the footprints of one.

Easter Monday.— To-day there was a great baptism in the church of about ninety adults, and the service lasted

three hours and a half. About as many more are to be baptized in a fortnight.

April 13.—We went on Friday to a village at the other extreme of the district, fifty-five minutes each way; slow to go, because of the steepness; slow to return, because of the slipperiness. Halfway there, it began to rain, and continued raining hard till about halfway home. Part of the way was a narrow track between bushes and high grass, which nearly met across the path, so you can imagine we arrived there soaked through and through. A man from the village came part of the way to help, but except for him the people were most indifferent, and would hardly say 'Good evening.' Coming home, I slipped twice flat down on my back; but as it was downhill, I had not far to fall, and did not hurt myself. After that, I held tight to the man's hand, and how he kept his footing and managed to keep me up when I lost mine, I cannot imagine in the least. After he left we came to a very steep part, and I could not think what to do, so I repeated the first two lines of a hymn—

Sai tiop ma tanangku, Togu ma au,
'Hold Thou my hand, Lead Thou me'—

using it definitely as a prayer, but not aloud. The moment I had done this, I heard a voice at my elbow, saying, 'I will lead the lady.' I had no idea any one was there, as bare feet make no sound. It was a man who is preparing for baptism. I don't know him, but he overtook me just at that moment, so I told him how he was used as an answer to prayer. Bartimeus is not up to leading me in slippery places, we might both fall down together, but he can perfectly keep his own footing. It is not the rainy season, and there were no signs of rain when we started, so it was not our own folly, and when dry it would have been quite easy. I did not feel at all tired

that evening after getting home, but yesterday and to-day I have been tired. These expeditions are certainly great fun, though this was perhaps rather extra, and I cannot cease to be filled with thankfulness at the wonderful fact that my feet are always perfectly protected, from wound, blister, bruise, or scratch.

April 14.—It is now arranged for one of the six teachers' wives to go alternately with us on these visits, as Mr. Johannsen thought it would be a good training for them. This is a great pleasure to all concerned, and we began to-day with Joanna.

It poured with rain before starting (and continued raining the whole time). The village we visited is heathen, all but one family, but the chief and a few women have been coming to church this last month, and seemed particularly glad to hear we were coming, as I always send a message now, a day or two before. It was up a very steep mountain, along a clay path or cleft, with mud so deep that they warned me (in vain) not to put my foot in it, the only alternative being indescribable slipperiness, with no foothold to speak of; but Joanna managed to haul me up somehow, and Bartimeus followed close behind, so that I might fall back upon him, in case of necessity. This was the first place where I sat on a mat, like the others, instead of on a little stool, or sack of rice, and it was so dark, they lighted a funny little oil lamp, and a boy held it for me. It was most interesting to tell them about last Friday, and how my God had answered prayer and protected me on the slippery way, and then of His love to the Batta people, and how He wanted us all to belong to His family, and how Christ had died on the cross, as man, that our sins might die with Him, and how He had risen from the dead, as God, that our souls might live with Him, and I read Mark xvi. 16. . . .

Coming down the mountain was even more dangerous

than going up, so two men from the village acted as guides, and I gave a hand to each, so that when both feet together slipped from under me, and went slithering down a steep place, I had only peacefully to follow, held more or less perpendicular by my two faithful heathen! Now I don't think anything new can happen to me after all this! I do not think I have ever come across such thunderstorms as here, certainly not such a succession of them. The most appalling crash of thunder will break upon us apparently just overhead, without any lightning, or the slightest warning of any kind, followed probably by a tremendous downpour of rain; but there must be lightning too, as a child was killed by it the other day in this district.

I am always forgetting to tell you that, to my great sorrow, that leper girl has been sent away to Sipirok, where there are other lepers, and hot springs which are supposed to be good for leprosy. She had to pass through Pansur-na-pitu, so Bartimeus and the faithful student Samuel, and I, joined her in the road to say 'Good-bye,' and a little crowd gathered, and we sang the before-mentioned hymn, 'Hold Thou my hand,' and had a prayer, and talked a little and she went on her way.

April 16.—The village we visited yesterday was said to be inaccessible, being knee-deep in mud! Of course it was not knee-deep, but rather worse than I expected, being nine or ten inches deep in perfectly black slimy mud! I did recoil for a minute and try to creep round the edge, but it was no good, the thing had to be done, and it lasted a long way, though not so deep always; so we were glad enough to get our feet washed in the village, and had a very good, earnest meeting. In coming away, two sharp stones, concealed in the mud, lay in wait for my two feet; and, strangely enough, almost at the same moment they both got hurt in the same place. Happily a man was holding my hand tight, as I should not at all have liked to fall in

that mud. It hurt pretty much at the time, but I was able to walk home almost as well as usual.

If money can mend that path, or open out another entrance to that village, I expect it will be so before I visit it again. Blind Bartimeus is in a most joyful frame of mind, as now all the worst villages are done.

April 20.—Bartimeus is not old, although he is blind; in fact, he is younger than I am! and he has three little children. He is my teacher, and not my servant, though he carries my things, and washes my feet (equivalent to blacking my boots in England) while I sit upon a stool, or stand on one foot by the side of a stream, and he lays down the mats and gets the room ready for the women. He lives in a village two or three minutes off from here.

The natives call me, as they do all the missionaries' wives, 'the Lady' or 'Lady Needham,' the words 'Mrs.' or 'Miss' being, I believe, unknown in Batta; and the missionaries are all 'Lords'—the distinction between that and the Divine Lord being an *h* in the middle of the latter, as *tuan* and *Tuhan*.

To-day there was an interesting service in church; about ninety people, mostly adults, were baptized, and among them some whole families, like the households in the New Testament history.

Pansur-na-pitu, *May* 9.—This week there has been a two days' conference here, for native clergy and teachers, ending with the Holy Communion, in which Mrs. Johannsen and I took part. For the future this conference is to be held monthly, and as many wives as possible are to come too. These, of course, will fall to my share, and will be able to sleep in the new Princess House, when finished. The men, about sixty, all sleep in the church, and have their meals in the church room.

May 10.—This evening (Mrs. Johannsen and I have prayer together on Saturday evenings) I prayed for the first time (with her) in Batta, which I found easier than German, or, at any rate, quite as easy. I most heartily thank God for this step in advance. . . . We have started a little prayer-meeting now on Saturdays at 8.30 a.m. It was Bartimeus who proposed it, which I thought was a sign of life. It is just for us two, and the teachers' wives who are associated now with us in the work of visiting the villages. The work here is very much the same as in England, namely, proclaiming the glorious gospel of a full salvation to a world perishing in the bondage of Satan, only there are more opportunities here of coming in contact with the unconverted. It is indeed a beautiful work and a marvellous privilege and responsibility, and God has put into my heart a deep burning love for my Batta sisters, so that I feel I could do *anything* to bring about their salvation; but I know that the best proof is to live it out in the little daily, hourly opportunities of our home life (1 John iii. 18, 19). It is so lovely how the dear Lord gives me messages as we walk through this sunny valley to the various villages. The rice harvest is drawing to an end, and no one can think or speak of anything but rice; so, of course, I must speak of it too, and compare it with the fruits of the Spirit—the things which are *seen*, with the things which are *not* seen. To-day we went by a narrow little path which I had never before noticed, while the rice grew high on each side, and covered it from sight. Here was a message to the people who so often fail to find the narrow path to eternal life, because the things of this world hide it from their sight. A little further on we came upon two women busy with their work. They belonged to the village we were going to, so very earnestly we entreated them to come back with us for the meeting. After much persuasion *one* came, but the other would not.

On reaching the place, I opened the meeting with Luke xvii. 'Two *people* (so it is in the Batta language) shall be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other left.' They were bound to listen after that God-given introduction. It was a wonderful sight to see the whole village (about fifteen families) assemble, all sitting on a mat, or on the ground in the open air, men, women, and children, and I on a sack of rice, whilst pigs, dogs, and hens wandered around, and if these made too much noise, we took to singing; but the people were very attentive, and I believe the word went home.

May 18.—Pansur-na-pitu means the seven springs; *Pansur* means spring (of water), *na* is a preposition, and *pitu* is seven. Springs, of which there are seven, it might be translated. It is very striking to live in a country where no one is very rich, and no one starving. Every one has a rice field, and they are most simple in their habits. It would be a paradise if it were not for sin, and I earnestly trust that neither we nor the Dutch Government will corrupt them from their simplicity. I do so long for all missionaries to accommodate themselves more to the ways of the people among whom they have come to live, and I think we need constantly to remember 2 Cor. xi. 3, lest our minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

May 25.—Last Tuesday was a beautiful day. Once a year, after the harvest, it is the law for each family to bring, or send, a percentage of their rice, one measure out of every sack, for the maintenance of their schoolmaster, and it is stored up in the church room and sold. So, this year, all those from Pansur-na-pitu were told to bring their rice last Tuesday at 8 a.m., and to stay for the meeting. Of course, very many sent their rice by their friends, or failed to come at the right time, but we had a beautiful and remarkable time. We kept up the meeting for about

two hours, with singing, prayer, and short addresses from Bartimeus, Mr. Johannsen, and me, and all along women kept dropping in with sacks of rice on their heads, which they turned into seats, till finally the sacks had to be left outside, as there was barely room for the women inside, about seventy perhaps. There was no weariness the whole time, but it was full of life (they are accustomed to a two hours' or more service on Sunday), and then, while Mr. Johannsen and the elders made the entries in the books, I remained for half an hour, talking to some of the women individually, and finding out the denseness of their ignorance of spiritual things, though they have come perhaps to church regularly for years. On Friday the same thing was repeated from, say, 8.30 to 11 a.m., only it was arranged for all the women to leave their sacks outside, which made it much better and quieter.

June 8.—The yearly conference of missionaries is now being held in Pea Radja; it began last Tuesday, and all of them (about fifteen) sleep there; so *we*, i. e. the deserted wives, &c., have to get on as best we can. As to Mrs. Johannsen, she is busy all day long, and sometimes in the night, giving out medicine to the people. I never knew so many cases of illness, and they never hesitate to knock her up in the middle of the night, or Mr. Johannsen, if he is at home, to give them medicine.

Last Monday, the first monthly conference of teachers' wives was a splendid success. We were a party of twenty-two, with Bartimeus and the nine teachers' wives who live here. The eleven outsiders all slept in the church room. I must have spent about eight hours in that room that day; first, two hours with the girls, then six hours (with breaks, not all straight on end) with the others. Of all the happy days, that was the happiest. The prayer-meeting to-day was delightful. Some outsiders came besides our own six, and out of these there were two who prayed with tears,

most earnestly. The Holy Spirit has begun to work among the women as well as among the men.

Mr. Johannsen is to go to Siboga to-morrow to fetch Elizabeth, their eldest daughter, who is coming from Germany.

June 15.—And now Elizabeth has come. She arrived yesterday, exactly six months after me; a very nice, quiet girl, nineteen years old. The rice fields are now all under water, with only the stubble showing through, so they are nothing like what I saw on arriving; a lovely golden valley, full of tender young rice. There are so many springs and streams from the mountains that one can always turn the water on to the fields. It is done to soften the earth, and make it easy to work.

July 17.—You ask, What religion are the Battas? Like most, if not all other heathens, it is a religion of fear, and consists in propitiating evil spirits, and torturing sick people with most painful sorceries, and eating their enemies, and their one idea of happiness is eating and drinking. They have no conception of a loving God, or of a holy, self-denying life. It seems all selfishness and begging. I have begun writing out the Old Testament in Batta (from Mr. Johannsen's manuscript) for the press, so I must save up my sight for that, as the influenza, which I have had, has been followed by a cold in my eyes.

Pansur-na-pitu, Aug. 5.—It is beautiful to see how God has put into the soul of man a yearning after the deepest and holiest things, even into the souls of these dear Battas, whom I love with a tremendous love. The way in which our Saturday prayer-meeting has taken hold of them is very striking. One woman, a student's wife, who came definitely to God for conversion about three weeks ago at our meeting, has during the last fortnight been gathering about eight little girls daily, every evening, besides her

own two, in her house, to teach them to read, and also has singing and prayer with them. I knew nothing about this till Bartimeus told me to-day! His own little girl was invited to join by one of her two little girls! She has also been wishing to go with us to the villages, to learn how to speak to the people, so she is to begin taking her turn to-morrow. She comes to all our meetings, and learns reading, writing, and needlework; but I had not the least idea that such a step had been possible for such a woman. It brings one back to the truth of the old Word: 'All things are possible to him that believeth,' Mark ix. 23; and, 'I can do all things through Christ,' Phil. iv. 13.

My eyes are quite well again now; but for two or three weeks they were really bad, and sometimes I had to spend hours in a dark room. It did not stop the meetings in the church room, but some of the other work had to be stopped for a while. Once I visited a village with a bandage over one eye, but another time the eye was quite closed up of itself. It was a good thing that I knew hymns and Scripture enough to manage without a book.

Now, hear the story of the muddy village. You may have heard of our first visit there, when my heart sank at the deep, black mud through which we had to wade, and I thought, if money can alter such a path (which was not fit for beasts) it shall be altered before we go again; so I told Mr. Johannsen how glad I should be to have this done at my own expense. However, he only said, 'They ought to do it themselves,' and I heard no more of the matter. To-day, Aug. 6, it was on the list to be visited again, and remembering that the hearts of the people were perhaps blacker than the mud, I plucked up courage, and off we went. On reaching the village, what should we see, but the old path blocked up, and a beautiful new one made, level and firm, under the palm-trees, that

(it being now the dry season) I could quite well have walked in with house slippers on. It was a great pleasure, as the people gathered round, to open the Testament and read: 'And Jesus said, Now ye are clean,' compared with 'Create in me a clean heart,' and 'Blessed are the clean in heart,' as it is in Batta. The explanation of the cleansing of their path is that Mr. Johannsen, after what I said to him, strongly expostulated with the chief of the village, and said that an alteration really must be made—and it was made.

Elizabeth Johannsen has very quickly picked up the Batta, which she forgot during her ten years in Europe, and sometimes she joins me in my lessons with Bartimeus, but she helps Mrs. Johannsen a great deal with cooking, &c. She has been with me a few times to visit some sick people. She also plays the harmonium in church, and has just begun to take a small class on Sunday afternoons. She is a nice, quiet girl.

Pansur-na-pitu, Aug. 17.—You ask, 'Is this your still happier and happiest year?' Yes, indeed, out and out, without the slightest question—I can only say, 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.' On Friday there was a great gathering here to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Mr. Johannsen's ordination. The congregation subscribed to buy a buffalo or two, part of which was given to him, and the rest cooked and eaten by themselves in this garden, with rice as an accompaniment. It was a curious sight to see the masses of men and women squatting on the ground all over the place, and using mats, or sacks, or leaves for plates. The church was beautifully decorated, and a chair, bought by the students and almost hidden in leaves and flowers, was set there for Mr. Johannsen, Mrs. Johannsen sitting by his side; and there was a long service, and a crowded church, and a brass band, and

hymns composed for the occasion. Mr. Johannsen spoke very well, as he always does, right to the souls of the people. There came also thirteen missionaries and wives, besides some of their children, so that we were more than twenty for dinner.

Aug. 24.—You may remember about the village on the mountain, and the almost inaccessible path of slippery clay and deep mud that led up to it, and that two men were considered necessary to bring me safe down. We went there again on Friday, and though it must have been at its worst, through a deluge of rain the same day, they had (quite unknown and unexpected by me) made it as good as was possible under the circumstances, the mud scraped away, and kind of steps cut in the clay; but it continued to rain, and the coming down would have been difficult, only a nice-minded young man took it into his head to come too, with a large iron hoe, and cut fresh steps, which made it as easy as possible; so now the two worst paths to the villages have been mended without any trouble or expense to me, and without my speaking to them about it. Mr. Johannsen seems to have become impressed with the worth and reality of our Saturday prayer-meeting, and the other day asked if I would have any objection to admitting the six teachers as well as their wives, both on Saturdays and to the evening prayer-meeting at our monthly convention, so they came yesterday. Of course it was a little difficult at first to break down the stiffness, but through God's goodness, and perhaps through His word—'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty,' 2 Cor. iii. 17; 'In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female,' Gal. iii. 28—it did get broken down. First two of the teachers prayed, and were followed by nine women, with a good deal of short speaking, reading, and singing in between.

Aug. 31.—One day this week, I had the pleasure of

hearing and speaking English with an Englishman. It seems rather like a dream, but I am very glad it is only once in a way, as it would certainly tend to hinder progress in Batta. Mr. Purdy, the Bible Society's colporteur, whom I met in Padang, has come to Batta Land, and stayed a week with the Mohris at Pea Radja, selling the Scriptures in the various markets around. Then he came here for one night; but all the markets are far from here, so it was no use staying longer, and he is gone north to Toba.

The bindings of my books are gradually being eaten by large beetles, which crawl about my bedroom in search of food. All those whom I meet I kill, but there seem to be always more behind, and they have begun to eat the leather of my davenport! Our girls' meetings, twice a week, are very well attended, and one day I showed them the six letters from the Walworth girls, as they had all sent their love to their black sisters, and it gave me a good opportunity to impress upon them the reality of the meeting in heaven. I have now a class of from nine to twelve great girls on Sunday, and these come also to me on Saturdays to learn to read, and I am most thankful for this fresh opening to get to their hearts, and show them the love that I feel, that through it they may learn to understand the Saviour's love.

CHAPTER III

CLOUDS AND SHADOWS

September 9, 1890, *to April* 26, 1891.

'Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.'—2 Cor. xii. 9.
'We glory in tribulations also.'—Rom. v. 3.

Sept. 9.—Seven letters came from England to-day. Yes, I *am* for ever singing, 'He shall give His angels charge over thee.' All my songs and tunes are now Batta ones. I know between thirty and forty Batta hymns by heart, but the same beautiful truth is found in all languages. It is also true that I have a work just suited to my taste and powers, but I think this is always so with God's people, if their wills are yielded to His will. He only waits for that, and then chooses the work and bestows the power; as simple as it is beautiful! He knows, too, how to alter and curtail (no, not curtail, only alter) our work, as He has been showing me lately. About a week ago, my old back began again, and I could only lie on the bed a whole afternoon, praying for and getting grace to bear the pain. At 6 p.m. Mrs. Johannsen came and helped me to undress and get properly into bed, so that I could lie flat, and then the pain went; and Mr. Johannsen came in, so that we might have a united grace before supper; and then after supper they came in again, and we had such a splendid, happy time together, that we felt we must sing as well as have the usual reading and prayer. It was a time of very definite blessing. Since then I have been lying down

between the meetings and the necessary writing, and the meals and services, and to-morrow I hope to go again to a village. The remedy is always simple enough; it merely means more lying down, and for the last few weeks I had given up the daily two hours' rest, but shall now take to it again, and visit villages three times a week, instead of four times. Mr. Johannsen often told me I was going too fast.

By far the most difficult work in Sumatra is the fight against Mohammedanism. The people are a little tired of their old heathenism, and many have gladly accepted this as an improvement. The great law of 'holiness' (!) is to go to Mecca, and if they only do that, they may live as they like, for salvation is then sure. Actually as many as 2,000 people went there this year from Padang, being naturally willing to buy heaven at so low a price. It is the old miserable story of the natural, human heart, which is willing to substitute anything for a definite conversion to an upright and holy life.

You may have heard of the little gathering for prayer in the house of the husband of one of my dear women, when she also joined in their prayers. While on their knees, a certain neglected heathen district south of Silindung was laid on their hearts. This led to their receiving permission from Mr. Johannsen to visit it. Last Sunday, Bartimeus and two others went and held a service there for the first time, and on Wednesday the chief of the district, Si Massom is its name, came here and had a long talk with Mr. Johannsen and Mr. Meerwaldt, and they had prayer together, and it is arranged for two to go there every Sunday. I believe, and hope, it will some day be affiliated to this district. It is pleasant to recall where the foundation-stone (or pebble) of this new work was laid.

My big girls who come on Saturdays and Sundays are most interesting, and also quaint. For instance, I asked

them this morning how many legs a lion had, and they said, 'Five'! This arose from the Batta word for lion, *singa*, having five letters. Last Saturday, I asked what they would say to me if I made them a present of two rupees. 'We should say, "Good evening, lady,"' was the answer; and this is highly probable, as it is not the fashion in Batta to say 'Thank you,' or to express any gratitude for kindness shown. My ten tiny little Wednesday girls are also very nice; the eldest helps the youngest, who is not four years old, to find an *M* by telling her it has three legs. This smallest one is very apt to fall asleep, so then I make her stand, but I have to hold her garment as even then she rocks about in a most dangerous way.

Sept. 26.—Time and strength fail to tell of all the blessings of this week, and to call to remembrance all those of this week one year ago. Every day brings in a fresh store, and I must turn my attention to the letters I have again had the joy of receiving—about seven on Sunday, and three more this morning. Such a pretty incident happened the other day. We had reached a village, and were all seated on or round a mat in the open air, and had just begun the meeting, when five bright-looking girls walked into the village and perched themselves just behind me. These were some of my Saturday girls, belonging to another village. They had come to a spring close by to fetch water, and, hearing the singing, left their waterpots and came to assist. The Battas have no idea of training their children to obedience, but let them have everything they cry for. However, Bartimeus has just begun a better system with his small six-months' old Stacey, at which I rejoice greatly. Mr. Johannsen gave an admirable address on this subject on Sunday, and of course I back it up strongly.

We had an earthquake the other day—quite a small one,

which did no harm. It was as if a person with more than humanly heavy tread walked across the room, making the lamps shake and rattle on the table.

Oct. 11.—A beautiful thing is happening just now. You remember about Si Massom, a heathen district, two hours south of Silindung? Since then some one has gone every Sunday to preach to them. On Tuesday evening, the 7th, the question was raised, whether it would not be good to send Bartimeus and his wife to live there, as evangelists. On Wednesday morning, Mr. Johannsen asked him (without the slightest preparation) if he would be willing to go, and he said 'Yes' at once. By the same afternoon his rice field was handed over to the care of his brother Benjamin, the chief, and a companion was found to go with him as helper—a nice lad, about seventeen, in the day school here—and by Thursday morning my new teacher was found and installed in his new work. It is King Solomon in all his glory! I felt rather timid at first at such a choice, but he is a meek, harmless old man, and came and sat down on the floor by my side in the most humble way. He is only a small chief—but all the chiefs are called kings in Batta—and I believe this will prove to be a great blessing to both of us here, as well as to the three who are going. To-day, Saturday, a house has been found for them, and they are to go on Monday. Quick work! and blessed work! Solomon takes much delight in the Scriptures, and wants to understand more. He has learnt to read during the last year, and has been a believer, he tells me, about two years. His son, Paul, is one of the elders, and he has a baby son called Jehoshaphat. What Walworth is to the Princess House, so is Si Massom to Pansur-na-pitu—a wild, neglected, but much beloved child—and Bartimeus wants me to go there once a month to have a meeting for the women and girls, and of course that is just what I should like. I offered to give Bartimeus to the

work, and be responsible for his salary as an evangelist. This, praise God, has resulted in his being sent, and no doubt the lad Konrad also, as he knows reading, writing, and arithmetic.

It is so good of God to give me this kind of work to do, as for a fortnight I have not written a letter in ink, and am now lying up to do so; the writing out of the Old Testament is also stopped, and the village visiting—and for the meetings, I sit in that nice ship chair; but I always sit at table for meals, and have very little pain, and eat and sleep as usual, and I am most happy and comfortable, and time goes very quickly. This letter is rather an experiment, as, if it does not make my back worse, I shall begin again to write out the chapters of the Scriptures.

Bogatzky's *Golden Treasury* has been translated into Batta by Mr. Johannsen, and a specimen copy has reached here, and is in my possession, and I hope to give it to Bartimeus as a keepsake.

Oct. 13.—I cannot tell you how I am enjoying this quiet resting time, lying as much as I like on the beautiful hair mattress and spring bed brought out from Barmen (the very best thing for my back), and I am in the gallery for an hour or two in the afternoon, in the ship chair, and my back is getting decidedly better. The morning Batta lesson is in my bedroom, the afternoon one in the gallery. This morning, early, came the whole Bartimeus family to say good-bye, and have a final united prayer. Even seven-year-old Hinsa and three-year-old Angelica said their little prayer, and then, on leaving the room, Angelica, though a very shy child, whose voice I have hardly heard, exclaimed, quite loud, 'And Stacey also prayed just now,' referring to the six-months'-old baby tied to its mother's back! So we were bound to finish off with a laugh. Mr. Johannsen has gone with them and all the nineteen

students, but of course they return to-night. King Solomon, like most Battas, has no idea of privacy, and pushes the blind aside to peep in and say good-morning, as I lie on my bed with my head close to the window, and he carries my chair about, and arranges it for me in the most motherly way.

Oct. 21.—The way my money matters are managed here is almost unbearable, only of course you will laugh when I tell you! My great desire is to keep it dark as to my having money, especially from the natives, and whenever any payments are to be made I always do it through Mr. Johannsen. Well, all money from Europe must go to Siboga to Mr. Schrey, so he knows to a penny how much I receive. Then, the other missionaries all go in turn once a quarter to fetch their own and my money, so they also must needs know. Just now I was to receive about £250, so what does Mr. Schrey do, but send me only £80 in paper, and all the rest in silver! I have seen no gold here. How it came from Siboga to Pea Radja, I do not know, but Mr. Johannsen had to send three men to Pea Radja, and a teacher and two students, to fetch it. It was done up in three or four parcels, and on each parcel was my name written. I could not even carry the parcels from the sitting-room to my bedroom. That was yesterday, and the same evening we read Haggai ii, 'The silver is mine, saith the Lord,' and it made me think the wrong name had been written on those parcels! . . .

Bartimeus and his wife and Konrad seem to be getting on well at Si Massom, and Bartimeus and Konrad come over every Friday, when Mr. Johannsen explains the Gospel and Epistle for the following Sunday to the teachers, so we have a good opportunity of hearing all the news. It is the custom to use detached letters to teach the children to read, so I have had a set made, so that Bartimeus can read them by feeling—a piece is scooped out of the bottom of each,

so as to tell the top from the bottom, and one or more corners cut off, to individualize the letters. I am also getting on well with my new teacher, King Solomon.

Oct. 31.—It is six weeks to-day since I went to visit the villages, and five weeks to-morrow since I sat at my davenport, but my back is certainly better, and I expect to be doing something or other next week.

Nov. 5.—Mr. Johannsen seems to like our present plan on Saturdays of alternately bringing the different districts before God in prayer, and said the elders of those districts had better come too, when their turn came round, as *they* would best know the wants of their people. Accordingly, last Saturday, just as we were praying for Pea (a *very* hard, indifferent district), in came one of the elders, bringing about eight women with him, women who, I think, had never been here before.

Dec. 2.—Since the beginning of this letter, I have been much worse. On November 7, I had a spasm in the spine (as of old at Lenton), and have been in bed ever since. A few times I tried to get up, but it was no use, and for two or three weeks I could not even write in pencil. It is just three months since my back first became bad, but it got better, and I visited five villages since then, and went on writing out the Old Testament in Batta till September 27, but after many ups and downs, I discovered last Wednesday a slight lateral curvature of the spine. I continue to be wrapped round with the same God-given message as for at least two years in England had been coming to me in all ways—'Fear not.' No less than four times was it given me last Wednesday, and twice on Thursday; 1 John iv. 18 in the morning reading, and Isaiah xli. 10 in the Dutch Text Almanac; but they only come now as loving reminders, for the lesson has reached, and I cannot see that there is anything to fear while resting in the soft feathers under the shadow of His wings.

I am perfectly happy and comfortable, and, strange as it may seem to almost all of you, I would rather be ill here than at Princess House. Mr. and Mrs. Johannsen are, as always, kindness itself, and I have every luxury, including beef-tea and chicken broth. For the monthly meeting of the teachers' wives yesterday and this morning, they made me up a bed in the sitting-room, so all the women came in there, about twenty-five, and I could walk in quite well, though I am sometimes very weak.

Some women or girls come to my bedroom five times a week for their usual classes, but just now is the weeding season in the rice fields, so the meetings are necessarily small, and the usual children's meetings have to cease for a month or two on that account. It would also be little use visiting the villages just now, as all women and girls are at work, so I can rest and be thankful.

Three daughters of the Dutch assistant are to come and live here this month, to be taught by Elizabeth.

How I wish everybody would give themselves away, body and soul, to the King and Saviour who has bought and paid for them with His blood (so it is clear stealing if they keep themselves back), and see how grandly He will provide for them; but they make so many exceptions, and keep back so much, that they do not give Him a chance!

As to my back, there is not much actual pain, so long as I lie flat, but I have at times very much throbbing through the whole spine, especially from writing, and am often too weak to hold even a small book in my hand and everything that happens in the house I feel in my back, especially grinding coffee in the kitchen, which to me is like an earthquake under the bed!

Dec. 3.—However, I am now very much better; without doubt health is a blessing, but equally without doubt illness is a grand blessing and help to the work, and weak-

ness is a mighty strength! Three times a day, after meals, they all come in here for reading and prayer, and these are very happy times.

The other night we had a severe shock of earthquake; without the slightest preparation, the walls cracked and the house rocked to its foundations. I do not suppose it lasted half a minute. The others had not yet gone to bed, and came in to see how I liked it. It is a most awe-inspiring feeling of utter helplessness, and God's powerful hand, and restraining grace. Our other earthquakes were different—a cracking sound in the walls, and a general shaking, but not such an upheaval from beneath.

There are grand opportunities now for quiet talks with all sorts of people. Once it was a stiff old heathen chief, who has lately been coming to church, and whose whole village is beginning to wake up. Solomon got him to come that I might give him a New Testament, and they sat on the floor by my bed, looking like a lion and a lamb, one in his red and black turban and heathen dress, and the other in his white Sunday jacket. His grown-up nephew looked in another time, and he can nearly say the Lord's Prayer.

Dec. 26.—We have had a very nice Christmas, and I can count nearly 300 people who have received presents from this house; but the beauty of Christmas Day to me was the arrival, in the afternoon, of Bartimeus and Konrad, with twenty-eight of their new schoolboys and twelve men, and they all came into this room and sang two Christmas hymns, and it was really beautiful to hear these young 'heathens' singing by heart the story of the birth of Jesus, and wonderful, considering that three months ago they had never even heard singing. The Battas never sang till the white men came, and Solomon asked the other day if Christ had taught singing even as He taught praying! Then all went to the church for the children's service, and

heard Mr. Johannsen's address, and I also could hear much of it from this bed, as he has a most powerful voice, and they saw all the children here in the church receiving their gifts—97 boys and 124 girls; and they could join, at any rate, in one of the hymns that were sung. On Christmas Eve at sunset the church was crowded, and there was a service, something like a service of song.

Dec. 27. - Yesterday, Boxing Day. there was again a very well attended service in the church, and even the prayer-meeting to-day was well attended. This is very striking, when one considers that the weeds are growing fast in the rice fields, and it must be a self-denial to give up bits of so many days—four in this week—not that their fields would really suffer, but it would be very natural for them to think so. I have just heard that yesterday in Pea Radja there were 518 at the Holy Communion.

Jan. 8, 1891.—To give you an idea of how busy we are, this is what often happens in the afternoon. Elizabeth is in the sitting-room giving a harmonium lesson to one of the three girls, while Mrs. Johannsen is in the back gallery giving a reading lesson to the six teachers' wives, in which is also sure to be some singing. Mr. Johannsen is in the dispensary, with the six teachers, dictating or reading with them some portion of the Scriptures, and I am, in the middle of all this hubbub, repeating the Catechism or some hymns to Solomon. The walls are only composed of one thin plank with chinks between, so it is nearly the same as if we were all in one room. For instance, the other day I was saying to Solomon, 'I don't understand what *lomos* means,' when I was helped by hearing Mr. Johannsen say, 'Look in Philippians ii. 12, sister,' and then came Elizabeth's voice from the front gallery, 'Have you found it, sister?' N.B.—The New Testament is my only Batta dictionary.

Jan. 9.—It was so beautiful and wonderful about the

Communion on New Year's Day. That very morning my back was particularly bad, and for hours I hardly knew what to do with myself. Mr. Johannsen thought it would be better for me to sit up a little the previous day to practise, so I dressed, and sat with them for dinner, and that was the result. However, in the afternoon of New Year's Day I did get to the church, with the help of Mrs. Johannsen's arm, sitting down through all the two hours' service, and feeling much better at the end than at the beginning. Next day there were no evil results whatever, and not once have I had any throbbing since, and hardly any pain—more than a week—whereas I have hardly been free for a single day since the beginning of September. For the women's monthly meetings on the 5th and 6th, I went both mornings to the church room for a good hour's Bible class, and hope to go to-morrow for the prayer-meeting, but always, in between, I am in bed. I have now, for the first time, a good hope and expectation of some day getting perfectly well again. I feel in my body that I am healed of that illness, though at any moment it might come back without the greatest care.

Jan. 15.—The fourteen elders' wives have now come one by one to see me. It was touching and sad to hear one of them saying, 'Oh, I cannot pray! but I have a son who goes to school, and he can pray'—as if it were a matter of education, or could be done by proxy! Now I am beginning with the wives of the chiefs. The one who came this morning is, I think, really a Christian, as I have visited her in illness, and found her content and happy in suffering—which is a *most* rare event with the Battas—not being able to read, she finds it a great comfort to hear God's Word read by her son or daughter.

Feb. 2.—A new little work has lately been given me, viz. to teach the teachers' wives how to teach. At present

they have no idea of teaching, either their own children or any one else's, nor of making them obedient. So now, on Wednesdays, when about seven little girls come to me for half an hour or so, one of the teacher's wives in turn comes too, and they sit round her instead of standing by my bed, and we go shares in the teaching. One extremely small child came three weeks ago, desiring to be taught, and put her little hand in mine in a most confiding way. However, the first time she came, she slept through the lesson, strapped on to her sister's back! The second time, she did not sleep at all, but sat demure and placid by her sister's side. The third time, I thought the teaching must really begin, so we tried to instil into her the first word of a hymn—only *Bege*. However, not a sound came from her lips, so at last I said, 'Can the child talk?' 'Oh yes,' said her companions, 'only she won't.' This 'she won't' is always considered a sufficient reason by the mothers for the disobedience of their children. So I said I was sorry, but she could not stop in the class if she would not speak; and her sister had to lead the small thing away, and it is to be hoped the teacher's wife learnt something, even if the child did not.

Feb. 8.—It is so pretty to hear the three girls and Elizabeth singing trios—they have very nice voices, and are nice quiet girls. This morning they were out quite early, gathering flowers for Elizabeth's twentieth birthday, and singing two hymns to celebrate the day, one in Batta, and one, I think, in German, in her bedroom; and Elizabeth seems very happy with us all, which is a great comfort. It is such a blessing to be in a united household, where all goes on in harmony, though the characters are all so extremely different; and everybody is kind and nice with me, in the length and breadth of Sumatra, for which I am thankful.

Feb. 9.—It is really beautiful about the raised type in

Batta for the blind. St. Luke's Gospel is now about to be so printed in London. In the meantime, the Countess von Rosen has sent four alphabets with John iii. 16. Bartimeus can already read his copy, and the joy and honour have sunk so strangely into his heart that he speaks of it to no one, and did not even tell his brother. He had always looked forward to heaven as the place where he would first be able to read. Then on Saturday, quite unexpectedly, came a blind elder from another district in Silindung, and he was quite excited with joy when Mr. Johannsen told him he would be able to learn, and brought him in to me for a lesson. I gave him one of the copies, and he asked how many times a week he might come to learn, and said he would send four men to carry me, as soon as I could name a day to visit his village.

Feb. 20.—It is really lovely to watch the daily progress of the new Princess House, and I quite expect it will be finished by the end of next week, seeing that all the students and the six teachers, and Mr. Johannsen himself, help in the work, and once or twice the elders and others, and once daily I go to admire and see how it is getting on.

The weeding season being at an end, all the usual meetings began again last week, and were very well attended, and I can get to the church room for an hour now every day, which is an immense blessing. There were about eighty girls on Monday and Friday. For the women's Bible class we were about fifty, also on Thursday about forty-five, and nearly sixty on Saturday. This is the Bible class which threatened to die out, from the utter indifference of the women, but Bartimeus and I insisted on keeping on praying and believing for it, and now they have come from at least thirteen different villages! Also on Sunday last I had the pleasure of going to church for

the first half of the morning service, the first time for more than three months.

Feb. 21.—This morning there were more than seventy, with about forty babies and small children, at the prayer-meeting. All the twenty chiefs' wives in this district come in turn to have a quiet talk by my bedside.

Pansur-na-pitu, Silindung, Feb. 25.—It is really sad to see the evil effects of civilization without holiness of heart and life. A horrid mercantile spirit is already taking possession of the people, a people that used to be content with their rice and their home-woven garments, and their mats—money seemed to be hardly a necessity for them. Now they must be off to Siboga to buy 'goods' as cheap as possible, with all sorts of cheating, so that 'My Father's house,' the human heart, has become 'a house of merchandise,' and it is much more difficult to teach Christianity now that this mundane element has been introduced almost under the guise of Christianity.

March 6.—And now, lovely to relate, the new Princess House is opened and in full swing. We have all completely fallen in love with it already, and it stands a good chance of taking hold of our hearts in the same way as its mother in Brompton Road.

Now I have ventured to begin a new work, and I think every one is beginning to see that it is a very beautiful one, though out of the usual line. Three times a week I am inviting the women from two villages to come and breakfast with me in their own new house. We began yesterday, and twelve out of the eighteen came, which was a very good proportion, considering there are many heathen in those villages, and I only gave them their own usual food—rice, greens, and water. Whilst one of the teachers' wives was cooking, I spoke and sang with them in the very simplest possible way, and after breakfast they all

stayed on for the usual Thursday Bible class. In this way I hope to receive once all the villages of this district in turn, two at a time, and it is no extra fatigue, and I lie down the whole time. It seems to me the very best way of winning their confidence and reaching their hearts, always excepting the individual visits in this room, and these go on just the same. The fishers of men, as well as the fishers of fishes, require quiet times for mending their nets, and so, you see, I have been lying here mending my nets.

March 15.—One of the three Dutch girls is, I believe, well, and Mr. Johannsen is pretty well, but the remaining five of us have all gone about like washed-out rags for the last week or so. With me it is, of course, my normal condition; with the others it is mostly fever; but the work goes on most prosperously, full of life and growth, notwithstanding this apparent hindrance.

The programme of my days will sound much more punctual than it really is, as no one has much idea of keeping to time At 6 a.m. I get up, and every day without exception I have been able to get up and wash and do my hair, so that, thank God, I have needed no particular nursing, though this has sometimes been with great difficulty, holding on to the furniture. On Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays I go at 7 a.m. to my other bed in the mission room, to receive the women from two villages each time, who come to breakfast with me. With these I talk for an hour, while the rice is cooking, and at 8 a.m. we breakfast, they sitting in a semicircle round my bedside. Each has a separate plate of rice, with a cup of greens between two, and a cup of water between two or three. We squeeze up the rice into balls in our hands, and also squeeze the greens into tolerable dryness, so I can well manage to eat lying down. At about 8.30 the other women begin to arrive for the usual Bible class or prayer-meeting, and the early comers always stay on for the later

meeting, so that on Saturday last there must have been about a hundred present. When they are all gone, I keep the teachers' wives back for a short reading lesson, and then come back to my bedroom for an hour with Solomon, repeating, reading, or talking Batta. Then I do nothing particular, except perhaps write, as now, or learn part of the hymn for the week. At 12 o'clock I join them for dinner, and stay for the reading afterwards. Between that and coffee, at 2.30, I sometimes sleep a little—not for want of books to read, but it is so bad for the eyes to read lying down. Then there generally comes a woman by invitation to have a quiet half-hour or hour, and Solomon comes for another hour. Between 5 and 6 p.m. I make my bed ready for the night, as it is better by day to lie on the mattress alone. Then comes a vague idea that perhaps I shall join them at prayers in the mission room at 6 p.m. I did try it a few times, but it did not do, so I have left it off again for a time. After the shutter is shut and the lamp lighted, Mr. Johannsen very often looks in for a talk, or rather, to listen to anything I may have to say. Between 6.30 and 7 p.m. I join them at supper, and stay for the reading; and this is a very nice time, and we linger over it rather, and sometimes sing a verse or two, and then I come straight to bed, but keep the lamp burning till about 10 p.m., as it is no use going to sleep too soon.

As to Si Massom, the people have had rather a difficult time; seven have died, and only five been born since Bartimeus went there, and this unfortunate state of things is set down by some of them to the coming of the Christians, and for the last five months they have been expecting in vain that I should go there. In the midst of this they have had to begin collecting wood for their church, and it has not been done without some little pressure from the Dutch Government. However, notwithstanding all this, God has abundantly answered

prayer on their behalf; and last week the position of the new church was chosen, and both ends of the district are satisfied, and Mr. Johannsen came back from his visit there with much satisfaction and pleasure, having expected to find many difficulties and hindrances. You need not expect to hear any more of Si Massom for a long time to come. Things in Sumatra go slowly.

March 20.—Yesterday the three girls went home for a time, as they are not well enough to learn, and Elizabeth Johannsen is too ill to teach them.

April 1.—I wonder if you went to a three-hours' service on Good Friday. We had here a most solemn three-hours' service on that morning of another kind, watching by the deathbed of Elizabeth, while the others were at church, and at last, at 12.30, the end came. Mr. and Mrs. Johannsen, Mr. Meerwaldt, with a lady who is visiting them, and I were there at the last, and part of the time Mrs. Meerwaldt and Solomon, and the six teachers, and Benjamin. She was only in bed about a week, and died of fever, and was unconscious the last night and morning. It is a very heavy blow indeed, especially to Mr. Johannsen who was greatly wrapped up in his daughter. The next day, at 10 a.m., was the funeral service in church. She was buried in the garden.

April 7.—Mrs. Johannsen has been unwell many weeks, and instead of getting better, she is most seriously ill, lying in bed, weak and deaf with fever, but as yet she has not been delirious like Elizabeth. God has been marvellously good, and as soon as Elizabeth's illness began, and the thing was necessary, He enabled me to get up for breakfast; and now I can look after Anna a little in the kitchen, and lay the cloth for the meals, and clear away, so the housekeeping goes on as usual.

I am so sorry for Mr. Johannsen. He is almost entirely in his wife's room, and did not even go to church on

Sunday; and the house is deadly still, so different from when all those girls were here. Dear, good, patient Mrs. Johannsen is most anxious to recover, for her husband's sake, or otherwise I think she would be truly thankful to go home and be at rest.

April 22.—Now it is all over, and the second heavy blow has fallen on this house. Mrs. Johannsen died yesterday morning soon after 2 a.m., and twelve hours later her body was in the coffin, and would have been carried straight to the church, if we had not had to wait for the Dutch assistant; and she is buried in the garden by her daughter, the fresh wreaths lying on the one grave, while the withered ones are still on the other!

The day before yesterday (Monday evening) I went to bed very soon after supper, and was to be called, as on the previous night, at 2 a.m., to watch by her bed while Mr. Johannsen rested. However, at 9.30 there was a knock at my door, as I was wanted. By 11.30 she was apparently dying and Mr. Johannsen at once aroused the teachers, and sent for Mr. Meerwaldt; and not only he, but that good friend of theirs came too, and we watched to the end. By about 3.30 we were able to get to bed till 6 a.m., the usual getting-up time. At once came to me the awfully difficult work of explaining that I could now no longer remain at this station, and I made up my mind to say it at breakfast time. However, I always find that when a thing is not shirked, however impossible it seems, God invariably smooths the way; and before breakfast Mr. Johannsen said, 'The time has already come that I must look out for a housekeeper, as I have to arrange not for myself alone, but also for you.' . . .

Wonderful to say, my back is not seriously the worse for all this. God always gives me necessary strength for the necessary work, but generally nothing whatever over.

How can any of you think that I am not interested in

all your news, even as you are in mine; only please never write when you have something better to do in the King's service, as I shall always understand the reason. To long for familiar faces and a loving touch, such as God has put out of my reach, would, I think, not only be wrong but foolish; I would rather use this God-given opportunity of proving that Christ can really be all-satisfying—'all in all,' but when the loving intercourse is given I can most thoroughly appreciate it, and thank God for the blessing, as happened in a small way yesterday. Mr. and Mrs. Steinsick, on their way through Pansur-na-pitu, stayed two nights with the Meerwaldts, and came twice to spend an hour here. Being the only lady in the house, it was of course my place to sit with her; and thus almost for the first time I have had some quiet intercourse with a sympathizing sister. No one would pity me who had seen this brightest corner of all the house, or who had heard the many, many times when I have thanked God for the weakness which over and over has saved me from some very difficult positions. I do not think it was at all the climate that injured my back, but for a very long time I had been living on imaginary, or unnatural, or God-lent strength. It seemed I could not feel tired, however much I did.

April 26, Sunday.—Mr. Johannsen considers that it would be an utter break-up of all the good work here if I left for another station, and means to invite the Silindung missionaries to a council here on Tuesday. My own duty is simple and obvious, and I have done it—i. e. at once to propose to leave. It is for them and not for me to arrange some method by which I can stay, if that is really the right thing.

All the teachers' wives of Silindung, with Bartimeus and Solomon, have agreed among themselves to help forward God's work. They said they had no money with which to help the new Princess House, but they would like all to

bring their own rice each month, so that I should not have to buy any, and could lay out the money as I thought best; and they began this month, and it will probably go to support the leper girl who went from here to Sipirok, and so marvellously came across her sister there, also a leper. You will be interested to hear they have now both been baptized.

April 27.—Mr. Meerwaldt proposes that I should set up an independent establishment at this Princess House, with Anna as my servant. Of course I consented at once, pending the future decision of the council; so this morning I removed bag and baggage, which was not a very complicated affair, as a bed was already there, so it only needed the addition of davenport, chest of drawers, washstand and chair, and as the room is nine feet square there is space for all, even with two doors: and here I am in perfect comfort. The other little room, also nine feet square, will probably be my dining-room, and its furniture will no doubt consist of a chair and the little table I brought with me.

PRINCESS HOUSE, PANSUR-NA-PITU.

CHAPTER IV

LIFE IN THE PRINCESS HOUSE

May 8, 1891, *to June* 12, 1892.

'Your servants for Jesus' sake.'—2 Cor. iv. 5.

Pansur-na-pitu, May 8, 1891.—Anna is a queer child. She will come to me complaining she has nothing to do, with, as likely as not, two large holes in the shoulder of her jacket, with the skin showing through. I suggested that that was her work, and have got her to bring me all her clothes, and she is quite pleased to mend them, with a little help, as Mrs. Johannsen had taught her needlework. Every morning, after breakfast, she and I have family prayers together.

It is most interesting with my girls to see them beginning to understand their Testaments and to find their places, but it is a very slow process, as they have never learnt to think, or ask, or answer questions.

May 14.—On Sunday evening I had a great pleasure. One of the teachers' wives came in to me here, with her husband, that we might unitedly thank God for His goodness to them in answering prayer. She and her little boy have been seriously ill for about two months, but are now quite well again. At the beginning of the illness she came in to me one day quite unexpectedly, with tears in her eyes, to ask me to join in prayer for her little boy;

but this distinct recognition that united praise should follow united prayer might put many of us white people to shame.

May 17.—You remember the woman who would not come to the meeting, but always made promises which meant nothing, and then some months later she began coming. Well, I have been thinking lately that the time had come for her to take a decided step into the kingdom of God, and there she was yesterday at the prayer-meeting though now it is the busy harvest time. At the close of the meeting I said, if she truly, definitely, wished to give herself away to the Master who had died for her, so that His will should be her will, would she stay behind, that we might specially do so in prayer? This she did with a companion from the same village, and her prayer was very earnest, simple and humble, and not at all hindered by her having one baby on her back, and a smaller baby in her arms. I am specially interested in her, as she was the first woman I spoke to, in the first village I visited with Bartimeus: may the Holy Spirit water the little seed that has been sown in that dear sister's heart! I have very seldom had any special after-meetings of this kind, as the Battas are so shallow generally, and so easily led outwardly, that it would often result in their merely doing 'as the lady wishes,' without any clear understanding; but when used occasionally and with care, I think it has been decidedly helpful. Here, and especially at Toba, the danger is that 'Christianity' should be considered rather the fashion. In the south it is very different, and instead of the missionaries being flattered and bowed down to, some of them have had very hard times.

I know I am only telling you the amusing and bright side of this life. There is also a very sad and troubled and difficult side, of course, but God will help, and grandly help, as He always does. I can most deeply and truly

rejoice as I look *through* the circumstances up to the all-wise and all-loving Father who brought them about. Truly His footsteps are in the sea, and cannot be seen by earthly eyes, but they are most holy footsteps (Ps. lxxvii).

May 27.—Yesterday I had the very great joy of at last actually going to Si Massom. It seemed, humanly speaking, rather wild, to begin with such an expedition, and yet it seemed that the time had come to try. Four elders from here were good enough to carry me in the covered chair, and a perilous and most fatiguing task they must have had, for two or three bridges over chasms had disappeared, and the steep clay banks were slippery with recent rain: but not once did I have to get out, and Solomon helped to steady the chair, and prevent it going quite over to one side. After an hour and a half we reached the position of the new church, where they have a very good meeting-place, roughly covered in; and about a hundred people assembled, half women, half men and boys, which was very good indeed, considering it was a week-day, and a very busy season in the rice fields. I did feel so thoroughly at home in such a meeting, and it was such a pleasure to tell them simply why God had sent Jesus into the world, and why He had sent the Holy Spirit. We came straight back as soon as it was over, as it would have been too tiring to go to Bartimeus' house for dinner. Notwithstanding gusts of wind and rain, it was fine enough most of the time to enjoy the splendid mountain scenery, and to fall in love afresh with this beautiful valley, as I could see it from afar on the way back. For seven months I have always been going to Si Massom, and now at last I have been, and am thankful. Several of those dear women could answer my questions just a little, about the forgiveness of sins and other great truths, and at the end there was an opportunity for any woman to pray, and Martha (Mrs. Bartimeus) prayed, and

one other woman, and Bartimeus gave life to the meeting by starting singing a verse or two here and there where it suited the subject.

June 12.—Almost every night, when the lamp is turned out, and I lie in bed in the dark, I see a beautiful pale bluish star, shining far up near the ceiling, sometimes still, sometimes sailing slowly along, and if near the wall, casting a light on the planks, which rises and falls with the star. This is a fire-fly—not a little red spark which darts about like the Italian ones; but still and dignified. I have seldom had less than one, and never more than two in my room, but there are always plenty in the garden.

Please remember the name of the first woman I spoke to in the village visits: it is Julia. It is so nice to see the soft look that has come into her eyes; and now her husband Salem, the chief of the village, is beginning to come too, and four times he has found excuses for visiting me.

June 25.—Funny that any one should think my letter a sad one! I am almost ashamed to find myself so often inwardly pitying the dear workers in England, and congratulating myself that I am just exactly here! As to conflicts, they are, of course, a necessity in a life of conquest, as where would be the victory if there were not a battle? Yes, I can truly say again, mine is a very happy life. My back may be said to be well now, only I lie down at every available opportunity—all the evening, for instance.

July 1.—Yesterday I had the great pleasure of beginning again, in a small way, the writing out of the Old Testament. A chair was cut down two and a half inches, to prevent stooping over the paper, and with two pillows at my back I safely accomplished about ten verses, and hope to do the same every day, and gradually more.

July 3.—You should have seen how Si Julia helped me last Sunday in the gallery to speak quietly to the souls of

three of her village companions. One of them hid behind another, to avoid answering me, but Julia got them all three to sit beside me, and then left us, carrying off all the other extra people with her! These three are very ignorant, and have not been baptized, and the result was that they all came to the three baptism classes this week held by Mr. Johannsen in the church, and also to the prayer-meeting this morning, which I believe was the first time they had entered the mission room! I am delighted to have finished at last my work of seeing individually each chief's wife in the district. The fifty-eight have all come.

July 15.—Mr. Wiebe, a Baptist missionary from Mandailing, has come to spend a night with the Meerwaldts, and I had the opportunity of a few minutes' conversation with him yesterday. He says there is nothing whatever to hinder missionaries from going to Mandailing, and he only wishes some would go. This is just what I wanted to know. In January, when Mr. Purdy, the English colporteur, was here, he said there was a very good mission society in Singapore, the American Episcopal Methodist, and that some time ago they were going to send a missionary to South Sumatra, but for some reason they sent him elsewhere; so now I have written to the secretary at Singapore to ask if some one cannot be sent to Mandailing from their Society, and I hope my Princess House sisters will unite in thanking God for this fresh opening, and that they will continue to pray for Mandailing with fresh joy and courage and faith.

It is indeed beautiful to think of these two links with Mandailing. God is evidently beginning to point that way, and I can only say much the same as usual:—

> 'When all Thy mercies, O my God,
> My rising soul surveys,
> Transported with the view, I'm lost
> In wonder, love, and praise!'

July 27.—Naturally with all these delays, hanging on now for three months, I could not hold out any longer, and broke down about ten days ago: so now a man has been found to measure the rice and clean the lamps, and a little girl comes to help in other ways, and I do a little, but not much. What will be arranged finally about this station, or if anything, I do not at all know.

Pansur-na-pitu, Aug. 11, 1891.

My dear H.

I am going to give myself the pleasure of writing to you on your birthday. My wishes and prayers for you are that the joy of the Lord may be your strength (Neh. viii. 10), just as that is my strength every day. Now, don't you fret or worry, even if you have fits, or if Mrs. C——'s rheumatism gets worse, or if I have to lie on the bed instead of visiting the villages. *It is all right*; God knows what He is about, and if we are too stupid to see the beauty of the path He has chosen for us, let us at least have sense enough to trust His unspeakable wisdom and loving tenderness, and rejoice accordingly.

To-day I have been thinking what a tea-drinking I had with you rather more than two years ago, and what a meeting we shall all have some day at home, and then you will be able to see these dear Batta women who have completely taken possession of my heart. The meetings with them are my great pleasure every day.

Sometimes I think what a good thing it is for the work that I live so much alone, so that all my love, and thoughts, and time are given to the Batta people. One must love somebody, and so I must love them, which I do most heartily; and I have got to know so many personally now, among those who come regularly to the meetings, and it is so beautiful to see the light beginning to shine in their faces. Many are in such utter, gross darkness and

ignorance that it is difficult to know where and how to begin. I can only show them that I love them. Their heathen religion is nothing but a fear of devils, and it is most difficult for them to understand the love of an unseen, divine Father. Their only idea of love is to keep sickness and death away from their families; that is one reason why my long 'illness' (as they would call it) has been such an advantage, as to be able to prove that illness, loneliness, and happiness can all go together, is a very great point gained. One may talk oneself hoarse, but if there is no experience to back it up, it will have very little power.

Your affectionate friend,

HESTER NEEDHAM.

Aug. 2.—I continue very happy in my work, that is to say, my two meetings daily, and the monthly gathering; but I can do very little more than this, as the housekeeping naturally proved too much, the only wonder being that it could last on for three months: and to my mind it is a very good thing that I broke down, as it makes some other arrangement *necessary*. God's blessing rested grandly on those three months. Now I am looking forward with interest, wondering what will be the *next* work that He will give me, if my strength returns!

Whilst you are all having influenza, we are having cholera in Silindung. In Huta Barat, lately, more than fifty people, I am told, have died of it, and there has just been one fatal case (the first, I believe) in a village close by; and in the next station to this a great number have died. It is marvellous to me that such warnings should not cause everybody to live each day as if their last. Oh! it is so nice to lie still and rest in the love of God, knowing that Jesus is mine and I am His, and that a time will come when I shall be able to introduce my beloved Batta sisters to you all.

Aug. 12.—The day before yesterday Mr. Nommensen sent word that the long-delayed conference, which was to take place next week, is put off altogether, as the cholera still prevails in Toba and also in Silindung. This is certainly a blow, though personally I had ceased to expect much, if anything, from it. Mr. Johannsen seems now to be making up his mind to take a return ticket to Germany 'to see his children,' and I hope he will return some time next year.

Aug. 17.—Yesterday week about thirty young people were confirmed; and yesterday a great many were baptized, mostly adults, amongst them the young man who cut the steps for me in the mountain side, with his wife, his three brothers and their wives, so now he has got his wish.

Aug. 28.—You know I wrote to the Methodist Episcopal Mission in Singapore about sending a missionary to Mandailing, as the Barmen Mission does not see its way to doing so, and I got their splendid answer on Wednesday. Yes, Mandailing shall have a missionary, even if they have to send all the way to America to get one! The wall that has been built round that place is really most remarkable —two Baptist mission stations immediately south, and a mission station from Java immediately north, but nobody in between.

Though I am perfectly free to leave any moment I like for Mandailing, it will probably be a very long time indeed before I do so, as at present there is no successor for the work here, and I am not yet able to get so far as the church. Whichever way God leads, for going or staying, it will be all right. As to this station, I love every stone in the place. As to Mandailing, I loved it before leaving England.

Sept. 10.—It is good that Anna has (what no other Batta seems to possess) an eye for the beauties of nature. If ever there is a halo, or afterglow, or specially bright moon

or rainbow, she is sure to come and tell me with great eagerness and pleasure. Once I believe she discovered an eclipse of the moon, for she came looking rather perturbed to tell me the moon was dead; and not knowing the cause, I merely said it was a bereavement which happened every month, and that it would be sure to come to life again soon, but Mr. Meerwaldt said afterwards there had been an eclipse. She knows the pleasure I have in flowers, and she can admire them too, but to the Batta women they are utterly valueless, not being good to eat. The Meerwaldt children bring flowers in here sometimes. One of them gave me a small stalkless flower on Sunday. This I put in water, and soon Anna spied it out and said, 'Did the lady gather this?' 'No! I have not been so far.' 'It looks very poverty-stricken,' said she, 'I think I had better gather some more.' So she went and got some very nice roses, &c., just enough to fill the vase. This may not seem much in England, but here any *voluntary* kindness or help is extremely rare. They are quite willing to help, but one must ask for everything.

Sept. 28.—Another of the teachers' wives has been in sorrow: two out of her four little children died within five days of each other, after being ill many weeks. It was a great joy to me to see how beautifully she bore it when I think of her desperation a year ago, when two of them met with accidents. That is a soul that has grown. Her husband, too, has been so good through it all. Both the funeral services were in the mission room. Conjugal love is almost unknown here, and husband and wife have generally nothing in common, but I think these two have now been brought very close together. He is, I believe, an earnest Christian, and a year or more ago he was praying for his wife that God would, as it were, take her in hand and teach her. He was not satisfied with her, and no wonder, for she was very childish and incapable.

Now God has been teaching her through sorrow; they have suffered, and watched, and prayed together, and (curious to say) on Sunday evening they both together definitely asked God to take this second child to Himself, 'If not to-night, Lord, then to-morrow, for she suffers so much'—and He took the child to Himself the next morning.

Nov. 12.—Pandita Ernst and Katerina his wife have now been here a fortnight. They seem nice quiet people, very willing to help both in the mission room and in the house, but far more in the position of servants than of brother and sister, though he is a pastor, as his name *Pandita* implies.

Two German mission sisters are expected every day to arrive at Siboga on their way to Silindung and Toba, and so I have sent a letter to greet them on their arrival; also explaining that I could not, as I would have liked, invite them to spend a few days with me, as my one available room—*this* room—is only nine feet square, and must serve as bedroom and living room!

Nov. 23.—Lately came a letter from Mr. Bonn, announcing a visit of two days to Mr. Johannsen, with his sick wife and their four children, all on their way to Toba. I think it has been an unexpected pleasure to Mr. Johannsen; and also to me, as Mrs. Bonn was not nearly so ill as I thought, and was able to come many times to this room, and we had family prayers *here* morning and evening. Not only that, but the first day when dinner was all ready, and my plateful had actually been brought here as usual, Mr. Johannsen said that of course I must dine with them, that it was as easy to sit *there* (for an hour!) as *here* (for a few minutes!!), so to my extreme surprise I had to go, not having walked so far for nearly four months, and not having sat at the same table with anybody for a single meal for nearly seven months! It was a very curious

sensation in every way, and I felt too weak actually to enjoy it at the time, but I think God's time had come; and I did the same next day, and feel none the worse now, though there was a great deal of pain at the time. Generally now I can use one pillow, and often two, which is almost like sitting up, and an immense improvement on that flat lying. With the work, however, there is now the trial of a long pause, as the weeding season has begun again in the rice fields.

Nov. 25.—Now I have had the pleasure of seeing the two new mission sisters from Barmen, one of whom is destined for Toba, as her sister is the wife of Mr. Steinsick, a missionary there, and the other for Pea Radja in Silindung, both enormous large districts, of about 6,000 souls each, widely scattered. They came on horseback yesterday with Mr. Steinsick, to stay one night with the Meerwaldts, but first came direct here just in time to drink coffee, all in this little room, five of us! Then they came again towards evening, and stayed for prayers in the mission room; then again this morning to be present at the Bible class, and stayed for a long talk afterwards: so I have seen a great deal of Sister Thora and Sister Lisette. They will probably have much use for their horses, in riding to the many affiliated districts, which are much too far for walking. God make them true sisters of the Lord Jesus, filled with His love to their Batta sisters!

Dec. 9.—Your letters are always most welcome, but two or three times they have caused me an extra sort of little smile, when you think fit to give me a gentle warning that I am not to die just yet! I quite acknowledge that my letters are sometimes written as from the borders of eternity, because that is exactly how I feel! With so many things happening all round, I often wonder how it comes to pass that I am always left. However, I am quite willing to remain some time longer, and during

this last month I have been getting steadily stronger for the first time without any drawback. Every afternoon I sit in the gallery for half an hour or an hour, and watch Anna skimming the cream, which must be a time of temptation to her, so it is as well she should not then be alone; and at our monthly meeting of teachers' wives, I was able at dinner time to sit on the floor with them, which I had not done for more than a year, and also to sit in my ship chair for the prayer-meeting in the evening. It seemed quite curious to look at my bed instead of lying on it.

Dec. 11.—There is no love here between mothers and daughters-in-law: indeed, it is often terribly the contrary, and home life is very sad and difficult, as it is the constant custom for the married son to live in the same one-roomed house with his parents. All the wives are bought, an average price being 200 gulden (about £16); and all the missionaries' efforts have failed to break through the custom. The girls themselves are in favour of it, as where there is no idea of marrying for love, it is a kind of guarantee of good treatment.

Bartimeus has just been here, and I learn from him that there are now ten men and ten schoolboys who have learnt to read in the fourteen months he has been at Si Massom. This is good news, and they shall each have a Testament at Christmas. Those Si Massom people have at last, with much urging, roofed in their church and finished the bell tower; and a few days before Christmas they are to fetch the bell, which has been waiting here for many months. The planks for the walls are not yet there, but at any rate the roofing in will prevent the posts getting rotten with the rain.

Dec. 23.—Mandailing is a district south of here, almost on the equator: I can only most roughly guess that it is perhaps the size of Yorkshire, and having been now

so long shamefully neglected by the 'Christians,' the people have mostly become nominal Mohammedans, but not as yet fanatical ones.

Dec. 26.—We have had a very nice Christmas here, both in the preparation and the time itself. Thanks in a great measure to the kindness of unknown friends in Europe, there were gifts for about 120 people, and happily there were plenty of tapers left over from last year to supply the Christmas tree, which is always placed in the church, and lighted up for the service on Christmas Eve, but no gifts are hung on it. They say the church was quite full. After service, the students, elders, church helpers, and others assembled in the mission room, where we had set out the gifts on a large table. The students received each some article of clothing, the elders a copy of Bogatzky's *Golden Treasury*, and Mr. Johannsen read the portion for that evening, and spoke to them as to the right use of the book, and we had singing and prayer. Just after they had all left, at the very best time, all my Christmas letters, from you and five others, arrived. I have not been to church yet, but hope to do so next week for the Communion.

Jan. 2, 1892.—On New Year's Eve there was a preparation, or general confession service, in church, for those who wished to receive the Communion next day, and I was particularly anxious to go to this, that the Battas might understand that such a preparation was just as necessary for white people as for brown; so I went, and also to the Communion on New Year's Day, and it was not too much at all, though I had not been so far for more than five months, and it was very rainy bothdays.

The custom on New Year's Day is for the population to come streaming in almost from sunrise to church-time, just to shake hands and wish a happy New Year. This,

to my mind, is a great deal too much like holding a court; but this time, having the beautiful mission room, it was much better, as Mr. Johannsen got a quantity of them to sit down for a few minutes' talk and prayer, and to sing 'Hold Thou my hand.' After that, and before morning service, I had a long English talk with Mr. Purdy, the Bible Society's colporteur. He came through Mandailing, where he had been selling portions of Scripture. He says some villages there have turned back to heathenism from Mohammedanism, which shows that they are not all satisfied with their new religion. But to proceed. Of course I did not go to the morning service, but it was nice to know that a large congregation was present, and after dinner arrived Bartimeus, from Si Massom, and his flock of perhaps twenty-four schoolboys and several men—'just to shake hands'; so I got them all into the mission room, that we might have a nice little time together, and I thought their singing a great improvement on what it was a year ago. At 4 p.m. was the Communion Service, about 110 present, Mr. Purdy, of course, being one. So altogether it was a very nice two days. On Boxing Day, my work was to read over for correction the whole of Isaiah, with one of the students, or rather with two, who took it by turns to come. It took about eight hours.

Jan. 26.—On my birthday, Bartimeus came over with fifteen men and women from Si Massom, who were to be baptized the next day in their yet unfinished church. Two of the men have become faithful fellow workers of his, and another, though severely put to the test by family affliction, has borne it wonderfully well. This service must have been a great joy to Bartimeus after his fifteen months' most difficult work there. Pandita Ernst went over there on Sunday to baptize them; indeed, it is one of his special works now to look after Si Massom.

Feb. 7.—I was so much interested in a poor mother who

came the other day for medicine for her baby. She looked at me with such large sorrowful eyes, so I asked her to sit by me in the verandah till Mr. Johannsen was disengaged, and we talked of her baby and of the disease of the soul, and we had prayer together, and then she looked at me with such an inquiring look, as much as to say, 'But what next? What shall we do now?' So I answered the look, and said, 'Now we must take the joy and peace we have asked for. God has heard our prayer. He has given, and we must take.' Then a smile broke over her face, and she went away looking quite satisfied. Such a simple faith!

I am glad to say the weeding season is at last over, so the women's Bible classes began again last week, and the girls' meetings begin this week. It was a great pleasure, at the last monthly meeting, to tell the teachers' wives about the Princess House. There is no word for Princess in Batta, so it had to be called, 'The House of the King's daughters,' which brought one to the central point at once. The other day Anna said to me with great delight, 'I can speak a little English now, because I can say Princess House!' That is all the English she knows.

Feb. 13.—I had a number of large uncoloured Bible pictures given me before leaving England, which I am now colouring, and it makes them infinitely more attractive and clear to be understood; and it is an immense delight to Anna to watch the painting. So often I think of your Gleaners' Union, and wonder if this year is to see any one offering *themselves* for the work. When that begins, it is a very grand and real time, as I know, in the Princess House; but we have ourselves to be willing to part with our best workers, our right-hand helpers, which for a long time I was not. Also I am sure it would never do to press any one to go out, nor to over-encourage enthusiastic and

ignorant ones, as they are so apt to hear and read only the bright side of things. Of course missionaries who are worth anything do not send grumbling letters home, complaining of this and that; but even in the most favoured positions (and I feel that I have been most specially favoured) there are sure to be difficulties. Those should come out who have already in England learnt to overcome difficulties, and who know how to submit themselves to those who are over them in the Lord, and can merge all lesser differences in the one great love of Jesus. Humility and love are quite as much needed as faith and courage.

I am constantly filled with wonder and admiration at the students' thorough knowledge of the whole Bible; they must be most admirably taught by Mr. Johannsen, considering they have, as yet, no printed Old Testament. I am now reading Judges to them from his manuscript, and before beginning or telling them anything about it, I asked, 'Where is it written, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"?' At once some of them said, 'Galatians vi. 7.' Then, 'What story in the first chapter of Judges illustrates the truth of this?' Some one answered immediately, 'Adoni-bezek!' I felt I had nothing to teach them, and might as well keep the manuscript closed; but of course there is always a great work to spiritualize the history, or, in other words, to make it practical. I read from three to five chapters to them each Sunday, and considering they are better informed than I am, you may imagine it keeps me well up to the mark to prepare in the week, and it is an immense help to myself. Such a curious contrast they are to some of the women, who cannot take in the simplest thing. I must say I have the greatest compassion and love for these poor ignorant sisters, who think they will disappear into wind after they die—even many who have been baptized and are regular churchgoers.

March 10.—Yesterday evening Mr. Johannsen finished his great work of translating the Old Testament, and it took less than a year and eight months from the day I wrote out the first chapter of Genesis, but the greater part he had already roughly translated many years ago.

March 23.—A new work has just come to me. I get some one to carry my chair, and go and sit just outside the grounds by the roadside on the three chief market days, to speak to the women as they come home between 4 and 5 p.m. Friday is the largest market, and on that day I began. Though driven in by the rain at the end of half an hour, I had two groups round me, ten first, and fourteen others, and we had quite a nice time of singing, reading, speaking, and prayer. On Saturday and Tuesday, there were fewer and more straggly, but perhaps quite as profitable, or more so, as two or three women stayed and had a long talk with me, and were quite surprised to hear that white people were sinners.

April 8.—My new work is really most delightful, and comes just at the right time, as very few women have been coming lately to the Bible classes. Anna carries the easy-chair and puts it in a shady place by the roadside, and a student or some stray person can always be found to carry it back again. It is only one minute's walk, so now I go every afternoon, if weather permits, as I may just as well sit there as in the verandah, and better, as no day has passed without a nice opportunity of speaking to some women, either singly or in groups, and there is every possible variety, except—so far—emptiness. Sometimes I invite no one to stop, just to find out who is willing. On one such occasion, six women came together from market. I merely said, 'Good evening,' when one came and shook hands, saying, 'We must have a wash up first,' and went off to the stream to wash hands and face; then they all sat down for as long as I liked. Another time I am surrounded by

a heap of little ragamuffins (of course these never fail even in Sumatra!); so I observe a demure silence, so as not to encourage them, and they are kind enough to clear off, if I insist upon it.

Then one woman comes with a waterpot on her head, which gives me the opportunity of speaking about the Water of Life. Another time four or five men sit down by me, waiting patiently and silently for me 'to preach,' which they know will not come to pass till one or more women come by; so presently one old woman comes and sits down, and the 'preaching,' which is really only 'talking,' begins. Then perhaps a troop of women come and do not want to stop, because they say they are so weary. So naturally I tell them that is the very reason why they should rest awhile, as a word has come from Jesus Christ expressly to the weary and heavy laden. Then they stop.

What makes the work outwardly easy in Sumatra (but only outwardly) is that the Battas are a conquered people, and have learnt to bow to the whites, and so what we tell them to do they feel they ought to do. For this very reason any sign of free will on their part is particularly welcome. Once a dozen women sat for a time with me, and as soon as they had risen to go nine or ten others replaced them, but I saw, to my great joy, three out of the first batch quietly come back and sit down to hear some more. Then when they lay their heavy burdens down by the roadside, it comes so natural to tell them of the joy of laying down their sins, as well as every oppressing weight, at the foot of the cross.

Another time three little girls about eight years old appeared on the scene, each with a baby slung at her back, and with all sorts of excuses why they could not come to the children's meetings, and with apparently not the slightest intention or wish of coming: but they seemed to like singing a short hymn with me, and one of the three came the

following Monday, having been absent some months from the meetings. I hardly know what expression to use, except that I am ashamed to receive such a beautiful daily work from God; why it should be exactly I that should be loaded with so much joy in service, when I think for instance of Miss Williams in China, who, in a letter just received, says she sometimes walked for two or three hours without the opportunity of speaking to a woman, and often days have passed without a woman coming in to hear the Gospel, and now, owing to ill health, it is nearly eight months since she has been in native work. Perhaps my faith would not have been strong enough to bear such a test.

April 11.—Since beginning this letter, I have had a slight attack of cholera, which only lasted a day and a half, but so pulled me down, that yesterday I could not dress without nearly fainting away, and had to lie down in the middle of it, though dressing is a remarkably short and simple process here; but to-day I am quite well again, and was able to sit by the roadside as usual! It is good of God to have brought me through, as I feel I have not yet finished the work He has given me to do, either in England or Sumatra, but I thought perhaps He was going to call me home just three years after calling me out.

Two or three months ago Mr. Johannsen again referred to a possible visit to Europe. The idea slumbered, however, many weeks, and now at last it seems a settled thing, if God will, and he proposes going in June or July. In the meantime I go quietly on with my work of trying to infuse Christianity amongst the Batta women.

Milly asked once what were the former habits of life of the people I 'called heathens.' Perhaps there may be others who doubt whether Christianity is much needed by a simple people who live by their rice fields, so I will mention two of their former customs. They would steal a child from a hostile tribe, treat him and feed him well,

and then, when the working season began, would ask him if he were willing to protect the fields from evil. He was made to say 'Yes.' then taken to the fields, red-hot lead poured into his mouth, and he was buried alive and left there. As to their cannibalism, it was not merely that their enemies became their food, but they were tied to stakes, and the flesh cut in slices from their living bodies. So, even if these two customs were the only evil ones, we do not count it too dear that a few missionaries have died or been killed in their successful efforts to put a stop to such horrors.

The great difficulty here in winning souls is the extreme shallowness of the ground and instability of character. Even Julia, the Batta woman who promised so well, has long ceased to show herself amongst us; but a few have continued steadfastly to seek light, or more light, from the beginning. A self-denying or giving spirit seems hardly to be understood by them. Those who are leading what might be called a quiet, inoffensive 'Christian' life, are apt to have a very keen eye to their own interests, and among servants or helpers one does not know really whom to trust.

The work by the roadside, continued for nearly three weeks, had to be temporarily given up a few days ago, being too much for my spine, but I quite expect to begin it again soon. Then as to work here. One woman has for many months been a wistful and faithful seeker after the truth, and now she has won over a neighbour, after waiting or trying for her for more than a year, and it is the daughter-in-law of these two women who comes so regularly three times a week to learn to read. These two scholars have seemed as dull as stones over their reading, but lighted up into life and intelligence in the most striking way when I told them the story of Jesus and the crooked woman. 'Now go home and each of you tell this story to a neighbour,' said I. 'But they won't listen to us,' said one of

them. 'Then tell it to your two mothers-in-law; they will listen.' However, they were bolder than their words, and each told the story to a neighbour. One neighbour listened, the other laughed. At any rate, it was blessed to the tellers.

One of them can now sing alone quite nicely, 'Jesus saves me now.' 'Go, and sing that to a neighbour,' I said; 'they may like to come and learn singing, though they do not care to hear the Bible.' 'Oh, I have tried that already,' said she, 'but they don't want.' However, she sang so very badly at first, perhaps this was no wonder.

The two little daughters of the original woman are also among the most regular to come to the children's meetings, so that six in one village are showing blessed signs of waking up. It is very touching to see this woman lingering behind the others after a meeting to ask me to explain this or that which she could not understand, or merely to ask to hear some more. I found she was quite puzzled about the Bible pictures, how I came to have two pictures of the Lord Jesus; probably thinking they were photographs. So I explained, 'These are only pictures of what the Lord did, not of what His body was like; none of us have ever seen Him.' 'But you know what He is like!' said she to me at once, with the greatest faith.

May 9.—A few days ago the news reached us that Mr. and Mrs. Püse, of Huta Barat, were both seriously ill, and Mr. Metzler was nursing them as best he could; so Mr. Johannsen rode over there the day before yesterday (Saturday), to stay one night, and see what could be done, and I begged him to bring back their only little girl, Amelia, seven years old, to stay with me. This he accordingly did, and she arrived in a sedan-chair yesterday morning, just before church-time, with her modest luggage, i.e. a small handful of clothes, and a little piece of torn newspaper, which was supposed to have wrapped them

up! It was most touching to see the little thing quietly stepping alone out of the chair, grasping her little pinch of extra clothing. She did not in the least remember me, as we had only met twice, but she is a most sweet and delightful child, neither shy nor forward, and I feel she is a most precious gift of God, coming to me in the idle month of the harvest.

May 20.—Amelia is still here, and is a dear good child, and there is no talk of her going home at present, as her parents seem to be mending extremely slowly. This week the classes have begun again, as the harvest is over, so she has to come into the mission room and sit quite still by my side. This week also is the great yearly conference for all the missionaries and Batta panditas, so last Tuesday Mr. Johannsen, and Mr. Meerwaldt, and Pandita Ernst, all went off to Sipoholon to be present at it. The same exodus of missionaries has happened at all the stations in Batta Land, and they will not, I suppose, return till Monday, so all the missionaries' wives and children are left in God's safe keeping. Even the elders and the head chiefs go for a day or so; so it must be an immense gathering, as there are sixteen elders in connexion with this station alone (and there must be more than thirty districts), and there are twenty Barmen missionaries, and, I think, fourteen native pastors.

To-day Solomon is also gone, but will have to return this evening, as during this time of desertion Mr. Johannsen has told him to sleep in the verandah with the gardener, as a kind of guard. However, the only thing that has happened, so far, is what no man could have averted, namely, such an earthquake as I have not yet experienced. For many months we have had none, but on Wednesday evening, just as Anna had gone off to bed, and Amelia was preparing for bed, came a sudden sound of cracking walls, and the house was severely shaken to the foundations

many times. It was all I could do to speak quite quietly to the dear child, so that she should not break into tears, for my own heart was beating very fast, as it is a most awful sensation. However, though, of course, much frightened, she behaved very well, and was soon in bed and asleep. There were three more shocks in the night (this moment another has come!), and very many more between the first and this last one, but they were all quite small, and one can smile one's way through them. The only result of the Wednesday one, so far as I have yet heard, was a barn injured in a village close by, and all the people rushed out of their houses and prayed in the open air; and at Sipoholon a barn fell and killed a horse.

The care of Amelia, though a great pleasure, is naturally rather a strain for my back, so now I lie down in the mission room for our lessons, instead of wasting strength by sitting in the verandah for them, but I am not at all cut off from playing 'hide and seek' with her. I quietly shut my eyes while she hides, and as soon as I hear a voice, I throw an old cotton reel into the particular corner whence the sound comes; then she pounces out upon it, and brings it back to me, and is satisfied. I am trying to teach her Psalm xxiii, but learning by heart is a great difficulty.

May 22.—In the last three days, there must have been at least twenty earthquakes, but only two or three of any severity. They come, I believe, from the south, and pass through Pansur-na-pitu, going north to Sipoholon, and two of the missionaries left the conference earlier, to see how it fared with their stations, as there is a report that one which was left empty has been injured. . . . 'Take my yoke upon you' (Matt. xi. 29) has come to me in a new light lately. I used to think of it like a milkman's yoke, bearing the owner's name upon it, as much as to say, 'I serve such a one,' and this is good; but the new

thought that has been given me is as of two oxen yoked together, implying they must work together and step together, one with Christ, learning from Christ; so if we are proud and haughty, we get out of step with the meek and lowly One, and the yoke galls. 'My yoke is easy' is so absolutely true, as it is not the yoke itself which hurts, but resisting the yoke. Having tried both ways, I ought to know.

May 24.—Yesterday was a full day, beginning with the gardener coming to my room before sunrise for the key, that he might get the bridle for Mr. Johannsen's horse, to go to Sipoholon to fetch him home; and before 7 a.m., as we were putting away the breakfast things, Amelia exclaimed, 'Here comes an uncle!' (they are all *uncles* with the children), and sure enough, there was Mr. Hanstein, who must have started in the dark from Sipoholon, as it is a two hours' ride; and very muddy he was, as the earthquake had destroyed the road, about half an hour's distance from here. He was in search of a breakfast, so Anna made some fresh coffee, and he made himself quite at home at my little table. This was my first male guest, and I felt quite pleased to have both bread and butter and milk to give him, which is by no means always the case! After breakfast, he read the portion for the day, which was altogether homelike and nice. He took some bread and coffee with him, and also an axe, to make a path, in case it should have been destroyed.

Then there came three elders from the conference, on their way south, with a request that I would read with them. So I read the account of the blessed earthquake which broke the prisoners' chains in Acts xvi; and told them of a woman who never would come to our prayer-meeting, but was bound fast in her village, till last Saturday, when, I believe, the earthquake was the means of breaking the chain.

Then came the children for their usual Monday meeting, and being short of a teacher, I took the second class. By dinner time we had the pleasure of welcoming Mr. Johannsen back, and at 4.30 Mr. Meerwaldt looked in with the three children, so they and Amelia and Anna had a tremendous game of romps in the mission room. In the evening, after supper, Mr. Johannsen came in as usual for our delightful reading, during which Anna and Amelia profess to keep as quiet as mice, but have really many excited whisperings concerning paper dolls, and matters of that kind.

May 29.—For the last month there has been much throbbing in my spine, and last Wednesday it took a turn for the worse. On that day Mr. Meerwaldt happened to call, and invited me to the christening next day. So I told him why it was impossible, and he said he thought God meant me more entirely to lie down, and he felt the enlarged vertebra; so next day, Ascension Day, I remained in bed. That night, after putting out the lamp a little before 11 p.m., I felt so ill that I crept to the door and unbolted it, that those who came in in the morning should not have to break it in, if I got worse, and then an attack of inflammation of the spine came on. The pain was so terrible that I nearly lost consciousness, and then broke out into a cold perspiration. There were two such attacks, and I thought it was death, and wondered if I should hold on till dawn. I felt I could do nothing to get ready to meet God, but Jesus had died on the cross for me, and that was enough, and I was not afraid. At last the dawn came, and I sent for Mr. Johannsen, and said I believed I knew of a remedy, and that was a milk bandage. What made me say that, do you think? Perhaps a month ago my cousin Mrs. Dixon sent me a message from Aunt B. saying I should use a milk bandage, as it would bring down inflammation; but I made light of the message, my

back was not inflamed, it was not a case in point. Well, Mr. Johannsen brought Mr. Meerwaldt, who quite agreed about the milk: so they soaked a rag in milk, and bound it round me, whilst I could hardly speak for pain. *Instantly* the pain and throbbing disappeared, and now I renew the remedy whenever the slightest throbbing seems inclined to return.

I have had good nights and peaceful days, but of course do nothing, this writing being by far my greatest work. Amelia has gone, as her parents are now better. Mr. Johannsen has of course been most kind and helpful as always, and has begun such a nice book on 'Answers to Prayer, especially in Illness.' He will be starting, I suppose, now in about three weeks, for his visit to Germany, taking a return ticket which allows six months, exclusive of the voyage. He feels it very difficult to go, and I shall miss him very much, but should be very sorry if he did not go. I am most thankful to say that the earthquakes have quite ceased this last week, so perhaps we shall again be free for a year or more.

June 12.—You are all so tender-hearted and sympathizing that you will be wanting now to hear that I am much better, though the spine is still in a very critical state, and I do not attempt to do anything but lie still and enjoy the peace and rest which God gives me. The throbbing and pain have never once returned except in a bearable degree, and I continue to use the milk bandage. I have *much* sympathy in all Mrs. C. W—— relates of shadow and sunshine. As to shadows, what are they but a proof that the light is close by—just on the other side? Standing in the shadow of the cross, we must be very near the Light of the World.

CHAPTER V

LAST MONTHS IN PANSUR-NA-PITU

June 5, 1892, *to January* 4, 1893.

'I am not alone, because the Father is with me.'—JOHN xvi. 32.
'My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.'—JOHN xiv. 27.

June 5, 1892, *Whit-Sunday.* It was such a wonderful and beautiful surprise, on turning to the Y.W.C.A. Almanac for June, to find that we—about 50,000 of us, I suppose—are to pray for Sumatra this month, just the very month when Mr. Nommensen and Mr. Johannsen, the two heads of the mission here, are going for a few months to Europe, and we are left fatherless. And then all the Whitsuntide thoughts come in, reminding us that we shall never be left fatherless, for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all pledged to come and abide in us; yes, all the missionaries may go in a body, and that promise will still hold good. It seemed as if the answer to the many prayers had already begun to come, for yesterday, our first June prayer-meeting, so many more than usual came, and for no outward reason. There must have been quite forty women, and very many men, and I told them about our members, and then we prayed for the Spirit to be poured out, and for His renewing power, 2 Cor. iv. 16. This was the first time I could in any way lead a meeting since the attack of inflammation in my spine ten days ago, and even now I cannot attempt to sing, or hold a book, or

read for long together. Pandita Ernst has been conducting the meetings, but I was present at them, and could manage to say a few words, perhaps five or ten minutes towards the close; but I dare not yet shake hands with the people, nor move myself more than necessary.

June 9.—Such a nice thought has been brought before me lately (though not a *new* thought) in connexion with the death of Moses in Deut. xxxiv, that he died from a kiss from the mouth of the Lord—as some translations have it, 'on the mouth of the Lord,' instead of 'according to the word of the Lord'; and we have given ourselves the pleasure of adopting this translation in the Batta, as it is an open question which is the most correct. However, even if *not*, it is unquestionably the most beautiful death scene in the whole Bible, although he died quite alone in a strange place. This is worth remembering.

June 11.—Yesterday was the auction of Mr. Johannsen's things, so this station was crowded with people till four o'clock. He has been selling off everything in what even I should call a most reckless way, though I always take pleasure in clearing off everything. You will have forgotten that I had the great pleasure of bringing a 'luminous cross' to Sumatra, the very thing I most wished to bring here! It was given me in Barmen by Miss Johannsen to take to her parents. This morning, to my great delight, Mr. Johannsen brought it in here to nail up by my bed.

Mr. Metzler, of Pea Radja, and Mr. Culemann, of Sipoholon, have given me a very friendly invitation to stay with them, especially the Metzlers, who would find me a quiet room, and, with the help of Sister Thora, would have great joy in nursing me. They are very kind, and I am very grateful and thankful to have this quiet refuge in prospect, if I can no longer fight out the fight here, and continue to hold the fort, though I fully expect to be enabled to do so.

June 13.—This morning our dear Anna left us, having

been a willing, hard-working servant in this family for about four years. A week ago, utterly unexpectedly, the thought was put before me that she had better go, as she would be quite out of my control, shut out to do as she liked all day, with the students constantly coming and going, and naturally difficulties likely to arise between her and Katerina. I confess I did feel rather like Job at first, as she had been doing everything for me latterly (she has even washed my head while I was in bed, rubbing it as if it were a kettle). However, the arguments were perfectly just; no one would watch over her when Mr. Johannsen was gone, and so I fully agreed. She does not know her own age, but is probably about fourteen, and is gone to Mr. and Mrs. Kessel, of Simarangkir, the next station, and is quite pleased at the thought of their five children 'to play with,' as she is very fond of children. She showed a very nice spirit up to the end, sometimes tearful at going, sometimes glad at her new clothes, and the thought of the children, and trying to make it easy for her queer little successor, a little stunted orphan boy named Benoni. He is perhaps fourteen, but is no bigger than a child of seven.

The chief cooking and general looking after will be done by Katerina, and I think she will do it well and pleasantly. This station is completely handed over to her and Pandita Ernst for the time, and I think it will prove a very good and peaceful arrangement. In this way God has again, for the hundredth time, shown me not only that the impossible is possible, but also easy, and a distinct gain!

Last Saturday we had a beautiful large prayer-meeting—sixty women, and perhaps twenty men—and some very nice words of warning and comfort from King Benjamin. Before separating, Mr. Johannsen looked in on them for a minute for some farewell words, as it was his last Saturday, and yesterday afternoon the farewell Communion took place.

Such a nice thing happened to-day. Mr. Johannsen went to baptize an old man in a village, the father of the young man who cut the steps in the mountain-side for me long ago. The young man with his family were baptized last year, all except the old father, who was too infirm to come to the classes and to church, so lately Pandita Ernst has been going to his house to teach him once a week; and now, on Mr. Johannsen's last day in Pansur-na-pitu, the baptism has taken place, so they are all rejoicing together. He was baptized by his old name of Ompusomanga-lang.

June 15.—Yesterday Mr. Johannsen left Pansur-na-pitu. This has been a difficult parting for both of us, as it is a long time since God arranged for us to work together: but it was all well, because He arranged the parting as well as the coming together. After breakfast in here, we had our singing, prayer, and farewell, with, of course, people waiting outside to have some last words, but they did not interrupt the quietness. It was the women's Bible class day, and as we had begun to sing, he came into the mission room and had a short prayer and farewell to us all, and left me there in possession of the women, and Pandita Ernst, and King Benjamin, and Solomon, and the elders, and we were again singing as he rode quietly away, with his students and others following him.

June 18.—You remember my telling you in my last letter of the one severe earthquake followed by nineteen smaller ones in three days, and that I believed no lives were injured. Mr. and Mrs. Meerwaldt tell me that in Mandailing one hundred and fifty people were killed at once, a whole village being swallowed up in burning mud, and that a cleft thirteen miles long was made, more than a yard wide in places. All Sumatra, from end to end, seems to have been shaken. I think it must have been kept purposely from me. Mrs. Hanstein and her children,

left alone at Sipirok during the conference, dared not stay in their house, and lived in mat tents for three days.

Sometimes I smile a little smile when I think of the many 'death-bed' letters I write you, but I cannot help it, for I feel just so. Lately, Wednesday, I had another night attack—no inflammation this time, or terrible pain, but mysterious fits of exhaustion, with my whole body going to sleep, and I thought I must send for Mr. Meerwaldt as soon as it was light, and that the time had come when I must go to Pea Radja; but by morning I did nothing of the sort, feeling nearly as well as usual, and took, with great pleasure, my usual Bible class—so good is God!

June 21.—More and more I feel how utterly independent of circumstances is Christian happiness. For instance, *what* makes me happy, I really cannot say, though I know well *Who* makes me happy, and that I *am* happy. Yesterday afternoon, Sister Thora rode over and paid me a visit. I am indeed thankful that we are so thoroughly one in our aim. She is almost desperate in her desire for a spiritual awakening among the people.

June 23.—I do feel that this is a very valuable time, and has already been signally blessed in bringing me into close communion with our good Katerina. Nothing would have done it but the going away of both Mr. Johannsen and Anna, as they always came between us naturally, and if an English friend had come, it would have been still more hopeless. Yesterday, Pandita Ernst and Solomon were away half the day, searching in vain for a servant. The Battas are so proud that they cannot bear service, and besides, it reminds them of their former slave days. They must all be school-teachers, that they may be called 'Master,' or else go into business to make (or lose) money—in fact, very much like us English. Formerly they were all content to work in their rice fields. The way in which Anna became a servant was that in former years

Mr. Johannsen lent her father a sum of money, which was never returned, so the debt was worked off by her entering our service—she received no wages.

Since Mr. Johannsen left, I have a good deal simplified the housekeeping. It seemed to me utterly inconsistent that they should make bread and churn butter only for me, as if I were a great lady to be fussed over and slaved for. It implied a great deal of extra work and complications; so I am now eating rice like them, three times a day, and *liking it*, and I drink my cup of coffee directly after dinner instead of at three o'clock, which would cause an extra lighting of the fire; and no doubt these little things have helped to establish a good feeling with Katerina.

June 24.—The other day I had a nice little visit from King Benjamin, only to ask that we might have prayer before he went off to a hardened village. He hopes, while Mr. Johannsen is away, to visit and preach in every village in our district—about sixty.

June 26.—My little Benoni gets on well as my servant; happily he can just reach up to the door handle, but his steps are rather cumbered sometimes when he has the baby slung to his back. My back is now so very much better; a month ago I could not have believed in such an improvement. Yesterday morning, quite unintentionally, and I may say unconsciously, I stripped all the clothes off my bed that they might be aired, and I lay on the mattress the whole day in skirt and jacket, looking quite dressed, and lay on the mission-room bed for evening prayers. Pandita Ernst has now found a servant lad for our outdoor work, named Manasse.

July 3.—After the service this morning, a little note was found lying on the Communion Table addressed on the outside to 'God our Father in heaven,' and inside were four thalers (about 17*s.*) with something like these words—'This is for God, for it comes from Him. It is a token of

the joy which is in my heart. If my joy increases, from this time forward the gift will also increase. I have said it.' Pandita Ernst brought the note to show me, and has added the money to the weekly collection. In my own mind I feel pretty sure it must have been from King Benjamin. He is almost like a son to Mr. Johannsen, and when Mr. Johannsen left for his visit to Germany, Benjamin felt it deeply; but instead of moping, as the Battas generally do, he has thrown himself heart and soul into the work of awakening the district, by visiting, preaching, &c.; and in a little letter which he enclosed in mine, to send to Barmen, he spoke of the joy with which God had filled his heart. All goes on very happily and cheerfully and peacefully here. Sister Thora has come to see me both Monday afternoons since I have been left alone, and is to come again to-morrow. This is a great pleasure, as we both delight to speak of the Saviour who has redeemed us, and whom we love to serve. She is full of work, and can only get away after her morning meetings for girls and women are over. It is such an immense advantage to be thrown into intimate companionship with a native pastor and his wife, as I am now with Pandita Ernst and Katerina (because though they do not live in the same house, they are in and out through the day), and it was worth losing Mr. Johannsen and Anna to accomplish this purpose.

The only chance of my getting through my work is to do everything very quietly. Every evening after supper, the little servant boy Benoni, and Manasse, the outdoor servant lad, come in here for an hour's lessons, chiefly Old Testament stories, with a text in the New Testament bearing upon the subject.

July 6.—The other evening I let all the students come in here in relays to see my beautiful luminous cross, which interested them very much, and on Monday evening I showed it to the teachers' wives at our monthly gather-

ing. It is always preaching a most lovely sermon. The work with regard to *men* here is very different from that in India; not only is there no difficulty in speaking to them, but they seem more ready to come and listen than the women, and I have constantly to be on the watch that the women should keep the pre-eminent place with me. So often men come in here to pour out their troubles or to ask for prayer.

July 15.—Sometimes now I have little after-meetings, and I think they are very helpful in making things more clear to their minds. The woman Tabina, who is causing such a revival in her village, is constantly inducing one or another to stay for these after-meetings.

July 23.—Oh the grand *truthfulness* of the Bible, and how one gets to *experience* it more and more! How often I have said to myself, I cannot understand this feeling of peace—it is so different from what I expected to feel—and then I remembered it was the literal fulfilment of the promised 'peace which passeth all understanding'!

July 27.—Singing is still too much of a strain on the spine, and after reading two Sunday mornings with the students, I was obliged to give it up: and I always have to resort to the milk bandage after Sister Thora's visits, which imply much talking and some laughing. My new diet of rice instead of bread and butter answers splendidly. The first week was difficult—a daily battle and a daily victory—but now I have tried it more than six weeks, and find it very nice, and have not the slightest longing for the bread and butter I used to think so necessary.

Aug. 8.—All my afternoons, except Saturday, are now engaged, teaching somebody or other; and this is not too much, if only I do not sing (it is very difficult to keep from that, but the pain and strain are too great) or attempt any sustained reading aloud. In your last letter, you say 'there will perhaps be such blessing and peace and joy consciously

in your own inner heart as you have never known before,' which is indeed most literally true, except the 'perhaps.' But the outer joys are also so many that I often wonder if there ever was an invalid surrounded with so many *real* luxuries as I am—for instance, I feel I am no burden to any one, never in the way, hindering other workers by requiring nursing, &c.—with daily opportunities of teaching, helping, sympathizing, or comforting others, morning, afternoon,and evening, besides often a lesson before breakfast to an early comer—not to mention all the stray comers between the regular classes, and quiet silent peace and rest when they are not here, giving me the opportunity of thanking God that He has let me live one day longer. Then I am surrounded with friends—and such *friendly* friends, though they happen to be Battas instead of Germans, which is all the better, as for them I have come out here. Then my thoughts go round to the other invalids in England, that, though they are perhaps all deprived of these special luxuries, God may give them, as He only can, something equally good.

Aug. 9.—We had an amusing and interesting time lately with the girls and children. Before leaving, Mr. Johannsen gave me an immense armful of jackets, which he had found in a cupboard; so I gave away thirty to those who had attended most regularly during these six months. It was absolutely unexpected, so not very many were present; but at the very next meeting seventy-two appeared on the scene, instead of about forty, as usual. Perhaps they thought jackets were to be given away every week. These girls' meetings can no longer be called *my* meetings, though I continue to enjoy them twice a week. Pandita Ernst and Konrad conduct the singing and prayer. All I do is to lie in the midst of them, choosing the hymns, and the text or Commandment to be learnt by heart, and the very short Bible lesson is always my department.

Aug. 19.—It feels curious to find myself possessed of two lads instead of one girl, as formerly, but it certainly answers very well. Of course He can take away all feeling of loneliness and unhappiness, and what is more, He has never ceased to do so every day during these ten weeks since Mr. Johannsen left. I am afraid we often have very 'atheistical' (?) ideas of the limited powers of the Almighty, and very unlovely feelings about Him whose name is Love.

Aug. 23.—My good old teacher Solomon is mounting up grandly. This morning quite early he started off, making a round of the villages near, reminding the women to come to the Bible class. As soon as he got here, and it was time for them to come, down came the rain, pouring! Only eleven came, and two at the most from the villages he visited. Well, I spoke, and Pandita Ernst spoke, and Solomon was to close with prayer; but he said he had something to say first, and instead of lamenting and complaining, it was a regular praise speech—that there was victory for that little band, if they would hold fast and live out what they had heard; that the room might be full of people, but empty of blessing, &c.; and then, such a humble little word—he had been asked to pray, but perhaps *they* could pray more effectually than *he* could: many prayed but did not obtain, but God must teach both them and him to pray. This Solomon was formerly a rich man, but a gambler—a very common sin here—and so he lost all his money and most of his goods.

Sept. 3.—At last the church at Si Massom may be considered finished, which is a great joy. Benjamin and about eight workmen from here have been there for four weeks, and though the Si Massom people were at first very grudging in supplying their daily food, they warmed up at the end and killed a pig (the usual sign of friendship), and on the last Saturday they held a kind of little dedication

festival, and the number of those attending the Sunday services is increasing.

Yes, it is true that the three weeks' visit of the sick missionary's little girl, and the twenty earthquakes in three days, both helped to bring on the inflammation in my spine, as the exertion of much talking and any vibration are just the worst things; but that terrible earthquake in Sangi Island, where all the crops were destroyed and countless people killed, was not noticed here. That sore evil in Sangi has been the means of giving us such a happy week, filled with quite fresh interests, and such a beautiful combined answer to prayer. First, I had ordered a piece of dark blue print from Barmen, as a little stock had become necessary here for servants, &c., and I thought it was perhaps right to have forty or fifty yards to sell to the natives. This is in one sense a great boon to them, being better and cheaper than at the market, but produces much grumbling, bargaining, and clamour, and, I think, often does more harm than good. Then I feared an indiscriminate mob besieging the station at all hours, the boldest and worst coming off triumphant, so it became a matter of prayer how to glorify God in this business. At the same time I wanted to help the Sangi people, but had no money to send them, producing another prayer for guidance. Just at this juncture the stuff arrived, so then came also the answer—sell the stuff for the benefit of Sangi; invite just those women to buy who happen to be present at the next Tuesday and Thursday classes; take them into your confidence, invite their help, and let the whole thing be sanctified, and teach them quietness and order, but above all the joy and honour of *giving*. Well, on those two days we explained it all, as a natural outcome of the previous Sunday's Epistle and Gospel, James ii. 13-18, and Mark xii. 41-44 (what in all the Bible could have been more strikingly

appropriate?), and I invited them to come on Friday before breakfast, to buy if they liked, or give if they liked, either money, or rice, or eggs, the price of all to be given to Mr. Meerwaldt, as he had written an appeal for help in the monthly paper. Thirty-six names were taken down, and about twenty came on Friday, when we first had a very short meeting. It was so pretty to see some of them coming in with a bag of rice on their heads, and then emptying it into our sack, which was at the far end of the room, with money box, plate, and material. Then while we were singing, to keep them from chattering, Pandita Ernst called out one or two names at a time of those who wished to buy, and they went and came quite quietly, and there was never a crowd at his table. It was a delightful meeting, lasting very little more than an hour, having begun at 6.30 a.m.

We continued the collection at the prayer-meeting to-day, our reading being, 'Blessed are they that mourn' at Sangi, and 'Blessed are the merciful' who help them, but 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Being the first Saturday in the month, it was the day of intercession for Si Massom, and Bartimeus came, and several from there. He often seems specially inspired in his words and prayers. On wishing him 'good-bye,' I said, 'It was two years ago to-day that my illness began; two years of great blessing and joy.' To which he responded heartily, 'Yes, that is so, indeed; and you have been spared till to-day to be able to help the distant island of Sangi, and I shall be praising God on the road home!' and off went the dear good blind man in a very cheerful frame of mind, and one felt so glad to be still alive and in active communion with all these dear brothers and sisters.

You wrote as to the probability of my having needs, but you did not name them. I do not know of, nor feel any, probably because God promised long ago to supply

them *all,* according to His riches, and of course He has fullfiled His promise; and do you know, it is not so very different here from what it is at Swanage. You were sitting with your face to the window, and I am lying with my back to mine, but such lovely fresh breezes, straight from heaven, keep kissing my face, coming through the waving palm branches, and sometimes in the morning the top of the mountain is all golden with the rising sun shining on it above the white fleecy mist in the valley; and I, too, hear the chirping of birds and the buzz of insects, to say nothing of the crowing of cocks, to remind me of the old Princess House! It is only to twist round a little, and then I can see the mountain and the trees; and if it is a sunny morning, they leave the door open, so that the sun can shine in through the little passage room.

Sept. 14.—At last the money for Sangi Island has been given over to Mr. Meerwaldt. It dragged on a long time, because of little outstanding debts, and further loving little gifts, and everything together came to about £2, which I consider a grand success, and it has been a very great pleasure all through, as they gave both more and more willingly than I expected—forty-eight measures of rice (a measure is three meals for a man, and costs about 1¾*d.*), six duck's or hen's eggs (which naturally I had to buy and eat myself, so it is well there were not sixty), then various money gifts, and thirty yards of material sold at 11*d.* a yard.

Sept. 21.—I was so struck with the verse for Sept. 11 on the almanac, 'The hand of God hath touched me,' Job xix. 21, and I could not help thinking that if Job had lived in Paul's days, he would a little have altered his expressions, and said. 'Ye need not pity me, O my friends, for the hand of *God* hath touched me!' for what in all the wide world can be more tender and strong, more skilful and loving, than the hand of *God*?

Sept. 23.—I am watching with much pleasure such a pretty little fruit of my roadside work last May. One Saturday I only had the opportunity of speaking to a few little girls, each with a baby tied to her back. One I was specially drawn to, because her eyes are always sparkling with mischief, but she did not seem ever to care twopence for the children's meetings, and had long ago given them up, her answer being, 'Can't, I've got the baby to nurse.' However, she appeared the very next Monday, and has been attending very regularly ever since, and has got now nearly to the head of the third class; and on Monday she brought her little sister as a fellow-learner, stroking and cuddling her most tenderly to make her feel at home, and finally, when lessons were over, hoisted her up on her back, and carried her off, as if she were a baby. Again to-day they were both there, and the small one had learnt to fold her hands in the most demure and pretty way.

One advantage of being left alone during the months of Mr. Johannsen's absence has been that I have found out how cheaply one can live if one likes. I could do perfectly well with a salary of £12 a year, covering everything—food, washing, lighting, firing, and keeping a servant—though of course it does not allow for preliminary expenses of house or church building.

Sept. 24.—Bartimeus was here yesterday, and said a tiger had been in Si Massom, and torn four pigs to pieces. They have not yet been able to kill it, though this is not its first visit there. Also yesterday two large snakes were found in this garden. The first was wanting to get into Katerina's house, but one or two workmen came and beat it dead; the second, Ernst shot with his gun. Some time ago one tried to push open the door of Peninna's house, though it was up three steps. However, God is keeping guard, and does not allow any evil thing to touch us.

Sept. 25.—I forgot to say my back goes on very satisfactorily, thank God—hardly any pain or throbbing when I do not over-exert my voice, but I still keep lying down; perhaps six months will not be at all too much for that. The six months will be up on November 25.

Oct. 8.—At last Thursday's Bible class, Tabina, who has become the light of her village, was absent, an almost unexampled event; but she called next day to say that sudden and serious illness in her family was the reason, and brought me two measures of rice and four eggs, not as a peace-offering, but a thank-offering for blessings received; and I have never yet seen a Batta face shine as hers shone when she said it. She looked quite beautiful. So there is one woman here who has learnt the joy of giving!

Sister Thora rode over yesterday, in steady rain (weather not seeming to affect either her body or spirit), as she wanted some help in the language, so as to explain clearly to her women that the 'old man' in them must really die, if the new man is to be living and fruitful; so we set to work with much zest to unravel it all. She does a good deal of visiting in the villages, especially among the sick. It takes a long time to realize the depths of degradation in which the people are sunk, and she longs to take the children completely away out of such surroundings—it seems little else but inward and outward dirt.

Oct. 20.—My good Tabina is sorely tried; while she is here at the meetings the neighbours steal her vegetables, and if she does not curse them according to custom, they call her a fool, and do it all the more. In the villages, people are considered fools if they do not return evil for evil. I have been specially enjoying the Bible classes this week, telling the women about the new, clean, pure city, the holy Jerusalem, with no sin, or sorrow, or sickness.

The other day some women were talking together about

the evil doings of one of the lads, and one woman said to another, 'I could not describe to you, in this holy house, what his conduct was.' This was nothing else than the restraining power of holiness, or the felt presence of the Holy One; and this recognition has only to be extended to their own houses and their own hearts, and then they will have found the missing link, the thing that has power to restrain their tongues and their actions. Their centuries of heathenism make them only recognize practically the presence of an evil spirit. They are constantly calling this a holy house, so it is well they should also feel its power. Another said, 'When I have been here, I have no longer a wish to go to market,' the great centre of gossip.

Nov. 10.—Such a delightful time we had here yesterday. It was Mr. Johannsen's birthday, and I thought I would invite all the blind people whom I knew of in this district to come and dine with me at noon. It was a bold experiment, from its extreme newness, and because, though the Christians would be likely to come, the outsiders, for whom it was really meant, would be most unlikely to come. Out of seven, however, who were invited, six came. Three of these were Christians—Bartimeus, Zacharias, and a man from Pea Radja; the other three, all living near here, were heathens—a man who earns money by playing a trumpet at heathen feasts; a woman, wife of a sorcerer (these two I had never seen before); and a woman who had come a few times to our meetings in the church room, but had never come to the Princess House. These, with four guides, and Solomon, and the eight who live at this station, all Battas, made us twenty. The sorcerer's wife, however, had to be called upon three times before she consented to come. I had translated a Sankey hymn for the occasion (No. 123), 'Once I was blind, but now I can see, the Light of the World is Jesus,' and it was

really beautiful to see the trouble my friends here took to learn it, words and tune being both new, and only three or four very busy days to learn it in.

The guests arrived about ten o'clock, and the heathen man was interested in feeling the raised-type Bible; but the chief work before dinner was learning the words of the hymn from Pandita Ernst, he explaining it all the way through with admirable clearness and simplicity and patience, most earnestly pressing home a present salvation upon them. Then Teacher Elias came in and taught them the tune, and while Katerina and Peninna were dishing up they all went in a body to shake hands with Mr. and Mrs. Meerwaldt. It was a most perfect success, and the dinner was so nicely arranged, each guest, to avoid confusion, having a separate drinking cup, and plate of rice, and basin of meat and vegetables, and plenty of fruit, *botiks*, after dinner. After dinner we had singing, and I spoke to them, and we had the new hymn, and the three Christian men read a little out of their raised-type books, and others spoke, Bartimeus being the most earnest and pointed, and we closed with prayer, and a kind of doxology, a little before three o'clock. I should have been glad to have had a little after-meeting for the three heathen, but work was awaiting them at home, so it was best not. Now only think, that I was nearly going to Pea Radja, to lie there with nothing to do, and missing all this pleasure! That *was* a narrow escape.

This little party has already made a great impression, and four chiefs have called upon me to-day, apparently partly to ask about Mr. Johannsen, but chiefly to ask why I had invited blind people to dine with me. The poor, the halt, the lame, and the blind are always despised by Battas, and they cannot understand doing anything for people from whom no return can be expected.

The day before yesterday arrived a card from Germany,

announcing the engagement of Mr. Johannsen to a Miss H. This is indeed very happy news, that he has found a second wife, and I am most truly thankful that he will again have sunshine in his desolate empty house: so now there is nothing to prevent his returning soon. I shall, however, D.V., be leaving this station before they arrive. This will be the only means of her really taking her right place here, and the work is so far established that I can now leave it with confidence in the hands of Pandita Ernst, who has been my daily fellow worker for more than a year, till the future Mrs. Johannsen can take it from him.

It was most difficult to tell my dear Batta friends that I was leaving, so I took the opportunity of doing it at the prayer-meeting this morning, weaving it into a parable. It was grand to see the face of my favourite woman, Tabina, when I explained to her about my going. It was shining like the face of a saint, as she said, 'Yes, this district was like a desert before you came, and now other districts are still lying desert, and we must not be selfish. It would frighten me to be selfish, though we should have liked to have had you long among us.' Her husband has been four days in prison, unjustly, so she has been sending him a word of comfort.

Dec. 6.—Mr. Johannsen and his bride hoped to leave on Nov. 19, and just possibly may arrive in Silindung on New Year's Eve. I am so extremely glad it is settled so quickly, though it rather unexpectedly hastens my own departure from this station. That God means me to start fresh work now, in a less favoured place, I have not the slightest doubt; and one reason for making the move before their return is that, if Mr. Johannsen came home first, he would not let me go, and I am not strong enough to fight. I hope to go first, perhaps on the 29th, for a visit to Pea Radja.

Dec. 7.—And now about Mandailing, the 'unknown land' for the sake of which I left England. The prospect of getting the Gospel preached there seems further off than ever. The cheque which I sent to the Singapore branch of the American Society, for preliminary expenses, was returned to me eight months later, from America. The reason why my efforts with that mission seemed so entirely to fail was simply because, in ignorance, I had written to the wrong man.

Dec. 13.—The other day a missionary passed through here from the south, and it was quite warming to hear the pleasant way in which he spoke of Dr. West, from the Singapore Mission, who passed a night at his station, saying it would be a good thing to have a mission in Mandailing, and hoping he would succeed. One cannot at all blame the Barmen Mission for not going there, as long as they are glad when some one else goes, as they are wanting all their forces for Toba, where the heathen are very glad to adopt a nominal Christianity, and to attend the schools. It is a much larger work *apparently*, as there is much more to show for it outwardly; but in the south, though smaller, the work I think is more real.

Dec. 15.—Three years yesterday since I arrived here, and six months since Mr. Johannsen went to Europe. They have been a most blessed three years, which, though I should not wish to live over again, I would not on any account have missed. First, sixteen months of family life with Mr. and Mrs. Johannsen; then after her death, fourteen months, with Mr. Johannsen alone in one house, and I alone in another; and now these six months of absolute quiet, with no temptation to get up and make myself either useful or agreeable, God's own most wise remedy for a throbbing spine, for which I am most inexpressibly thankful.

Dec. 21.—A delightful bustle is going on all round,

partly in preparation for Christmas, partly for the return of Mr. Johannsen with his bride. The students are all scrimmaging about, cleaning the other house and this house and mission room; and Manasse and Benoni, those two faithful friends, are doing the same to their heart's content in the kitchen. Yesterday we had the interest of getting the covered chair ready with clean new material, which I think will be sent a week hence to Siboga for Mrs. Johannsen; and Bartimeus is to come this afternoon to fetch the Christmas presents and Christmas tree tapers for Si Massom, and we (mostly I) have made eighty little bags about four inches square, out of all sorts of little scraps and patches, to hold—what do you think?—a few of Huntley and Palmer's fancy biscuits, for I actually heard lately that these could be bought any day at Pea Radja! So I sent for four tins, and these will make very acceptable presents for all the smallest children, besides being most amusing to make, sometimes three or four pieces to one bag, and I have entirely made eight garments besides. I have fallen upon needlework like a starving woman upon food, having no idea that the love of it was still so strong in me, but it has to be done with a good deal of moderation even now. It has been altogether a delightful preparation, begun in good time, and every one willing to carry out the arrangements, so that never has there been any undue hurry; and now very little indeed remains to be done, and all this given me just in the weeding season, when I expected to be rotting away for want of work!

Dec. 24.—This morning was our last prayer-meeting in the beloved mission room, a very small gathering, owing partly to the weeding season, partly to the pouring rain, partly also, no doubt, to Christmas preparations; but it was a very blessed time, and I felt God was near. We read Acts xx. 31, 32, 36, and at the close they all knelt

down (I also, which I was very glad and thankful just to be able to do), and had a commendatory prayer. We did not get through this hour without some few tears, but they help sometimes, though they seem to hinder. Leaving like this in the dead season, makes it certainly much easier for me to slip away quietly, and it is they, so to speak, who have already had to leave me.

Mr. Culemann, from Sipoholon, paid me a very friendly and most unexpected visit yesterday, to talk a little over our future work together, supposing that I should be going there eventually, and asking if he could help in the moving from here. He strongly objected to my plan of being carried in a hammock, because of being cramped up and being kept in one position; and as a chair was out of the question, he said he would have a thing made, a sort of hanging bedstead, without legs, to be strung on a pole, so that I could lie comfortably on a mattress, which will no doubt be much the best, and will enable me to take a look at this beautiful valley, which I fancy would have been impossible, wrapt together like a chrysalis!

Dec. 26.—Now Christmas is over, and it has been (I hope and believe) blest in something better than mere outward things. However, first about the outward things. It was simply wonderful how God not only helped but seemed regularly to carry one right through, making everything fit in, and with no shade of worry or fatigue. The amount of presents which might have been given if every one had received was three hundred, and I managed to get together two hundred and fifty. The arrangement was as usual. On Christmas Eve, after evening service in our enlarged church (which they say was quite full), and after going to Mrs. Meerwaldt's Christmas tree, the teachers and students came to the mission room to receive their gifts Pandita Ernst distributing for me. Yesterday afternoon he and the schoolmaster distributed to the school children, except

thirty-two who came to me here, the others afterwards assembling at the door to say 'Thank you.' What made the day a happy and blessed one was to see the many who lingered about for a quiet word between the services. The poor forlorn girl, who seemed quite to have deserted me, has been coming again the last few weeks. Her mother died when she was a baby, and her father discarded her: but though she cannot read, she could repeat yesterday what I had taught her months ago, 'When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.' After dinner, hearing many voices in the mission room, I went in and asked the women and girls what they were coming in there for. They said they were taking shelter from the rain, but as they always use the church and never the mission room as an umbrella, I was sure that was not the chief reason; and then one and another came and sat close by my bed, waiting for a word, making room after a while for another group, and so on. Then an elder strolled in, apparently with the object of looking out of the window, but at the first vacancy he too came near. Then when I got back into this room, another elder came in, and seemed loth to go away. After the second afternoon service, some more women came in and sat in a row by my bed in the mission room; but I had to cut them rather short, as Mrs. Meerwaldt came to call before we had done. There is a service in church again to-day.

Dec. 30.—Now you will no doubt be very glad to hear that at last I have come to Pea Radja, and am again living with Germans, and eating bread and butter instead of rice. Everything went off beautifully yesterday with the leave-taking and journey. From sunrise to 8.30 a.m. was almost one continual stream of prayer, one set of people succeeding the other. The nicest, perhaps, was when three women came, quite the first before going to the fields, that we might have one more prayer together. Then Bartimeus

with two of his little girls, and three or four lads from the school, and so on ; then Mr. Meerwaldt came to help me to get into what I can only call my little cottage. So we sang a verse, and started, and the weather was perfect, and I had all the way the most charming view of the valley, the women in the rice fields, the river, the villages and mountains. Manasse accompanied us a short way, Katerina a little further, and Pandita Ernst to the borders of the district. I think there is a kind of Batta etiquette about these things.

In passing through Simarangkir, the children were on the watch (knowing we were coming), and ran to call their mother and Anna, so we had a nice minute or two together on the road. Bartimeus, Solomon, and Konrad came all the way, and Mrs. Metzler and Sister Thora came out to meet us, Mr. Metzler and most of the other missionaries being away at the consecration of a church. My bedroom is Sister Thora's sitting-room at the end of the house, and everything is very comfortable and nice here, and there are beautiful, fresh, sweet roses on the table, my first flowers for seven months.

Dec. 31.—Mrs. Metzler is so very nice, just another edition of the late Mrs. Johannsen, a most simple, humble, practical Christian, at whose feet we who talk much, and keep dashing about, may well sit still for a while and learn. The weeding season here is already partially over, so about twenty women assembled in this room before breakfast for their Saturday prayer-meeting. It was so very nice, and 1 Cor. xvi. 6, which came in the daily reading of some of them, supplied just the thought we needed : *Paul* going, he knew not where, and needing the help (or intercessions) of the Christians with whom he was to stay for a little while ; *I* going, I know not where, and needing their prayers ; *we* going into a new untried year, we know not where, and needing each other's prayers.

Then, how I managed to get here; having with difficulty to bend my body to enter the conveyance, and remain there as dead, carried by strong arms, and accompanied by friends. How to enter the new life, bend the proud will, abandon the old things, lie as dead to them in the arms of the Strong One, helped on and accompanied by the prayers of friends.

Jan. 2, 1893.—We had a very happy New Year's Day, with plenty of work in the gallery. All the missionaries' houses have long outside galleries or verandahs, and a beautiful chair-bed of Sister Thora's has been placed at the end close to my room, so that I could easily have there a class of forty or more children, with a succession of small informal meetings for women. I am lying down there now, and have had no end of visitors (partly owing to people going to-day to pay their New Year's respects to the Dutch assistant, who lives near here)—Mr. Meerwaldt, for instance, and Bartimeus, with about a dozen men from Si Massom. My old Solomon came, and various women, and the Dutch assistant himself. With the Si Massom party I was able to have a regular little meeting, and some very nice times with the women (one of whom said, 'No doubt you know the Lord; I cannot know Him, because I cannot read His Word'), and very nice times with Mrs. Metzler. She has just begun reading *Holy in Christ*, and expressed a wish to read it with me, that we might talk it over together, which I was only too delighted to do.

The day before yesterday I made another attempt at sitting, but still it did not answer; however, I can now go all the way to the dining-room, the whole length of the house and more, past four rooms to get there, and the chair-bed, which is on castors, precedes me, and is pushed up to the dinner table in a most friendly way. After dinner, and when the cats and dogs, the ducks and hens, and horses,

have all had their share of rice (for everything here eats rice), we return to our places.

Jan. 4.—Of the countless interviews I have had here with the people, I think the most striking and touching was yesterday, when two old white-haired women came, each leaning on a stick—the one a Christian named Monica; the other, though long ago baptized, still in complete spiritual darkness. No question needed to be asked, for the history of each was plainly written in her countenance. Monica was all lighted up with spiritual joy, united with the greatest earnestness and anxiety that her friend should understand and get awakened; and she kept supplementing what we said, breaking it up small, so that her poor, old, dull friend might take it in: and when at last all the talking seemed to be over, they still sat on, and she beamed at us, saying, 'It is such a pleasure to sit here, gazing at our teachers'! Dear old women!

This morning too, we had a Bible reading with four Sunday school teachers, Mrs. Metzler also present. The chapter to be read was 2 Cor. iii, where Christians are compared to a letter and a looking-glass, taking the correct translation, 'We then, with open face reflecting as in a glass the glory of the Lord,' which Sister Thora illustrated with a small looking-glass, catching the rays of the sun in the most grandly dazzling way, and then spoiling it all by hanging a covering over the glass, the meaning of the covering being made plain by 2 Cor. iv. 4. There is any amount of work to be done here, and I am delighted to have come, but am also most thankful not to have come sooner, as the continual talking would have finished me off.

CHAPTER VI

SCHOOL WORK IN A NEW DISTRICT

January, 1893, *to January*, 1894.

'Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.'—ROMANS xii. 11.

Jan. 8, 1893.—It is now nine days since I left Pansur-na-pitu. Instead of that poor dear dirty little Batak boy, Benoni, to wait on me, and then march off leaving me for hours together out of hearing of everybody, I have now a Norwegian lady, Sister Thora, who is sole housemaid in our two rooms, to wait on me hand and foot, which she does with untiring devotion, and does not like me to put my foot to the ground before she has herself put on my slippers for me; and provides four men to carry me on a bed to the bath-house at the end of the garden! Mrs. Metzler, too, besides being a most loving Christian sister, is a very good cook, and makes a new kind of soup every evening.

There has been a great deal of social intercourse with some of the other missionaries, who have been visiting about; and next Wednesday we hope to see Mr. Johannsen and Mr. Nommensen with their two brides, as they have already reached Siboga. Mr. and Mrs. Johannsen have written to me, and they both very earnestly beg me not to leave Pansur-na-pitu for good, but it has remained quite clear to me that the widest and deepest good will be done by beginning a new work at some other station.

Jan. 12.—This is a beautiful quiet day, filled with sunshine and peace. News came two or three days ago that Mrs. Mohri, at a distant station, was dangerously ill with dysentery, and her husband hoped to bring her here, perhaps on the 10th, to be near the Dutch doctor. It seemed such utter madness that we could not believe it would come to pass, and that no doubt Mr. Mohri had forgotten that the Nommensens and Johannsens were expected on the 11th, which of course throws all Silindung and Toba into a fever of excitement; and very many hundreds of people would be collecting at this station, each one hoping to get a hand-shake and a personal word with Mr. Nommensen; there would be a brass band, thirty strong, and forty of Sister Thora's girls would be singing a welcome. However, on the morning of the 10th she was carried here in a hammock like a dying woman, and passed under the triumphal arch which was already erected. The only quiet place for them was the two rooms where we were, as they opened into each other and were at the end, rather shut off from the rest, so Sister Thora and I moved elsewhere. At about 2 a.m. I heard a heavy step and a knock at her door, and Mr. Metzler's voice saying, 'Sister Mohri is dying.' Of course Sister Thora dressed at once and went over, and before sunrise all was over.

Then letters had to be sent in every direction to all the missionaries who were coming here to welcome the travellers, asking them to stay on for the funeral. Crowds of people began to assemble, as this station used to belong to the Mohris, and they were widely beloved. It was a day never to be forgotten by any of us. Then the missionaries began to arrive, and I had at one time seven together sitting with me in this little balcony; and a perpetually changing crowd round me here, perhaps sometimes over a hundred, all of whom would have come up and shaken hands and had a conversation, if Sister Thora had

not forbidden them to put so much as a foot on the steps, saying, 'Now if you even touch the railing the lady will feel it in her spine.' Which was perfectly true!

At last, more than an hour late, the travellers came, and of course no sound of song or brass band was to be heard. A short service was first held in the church, and I retreated to my little room to be out of the crowd, but even there (and this was very nice) Pandita Ernst and the students and others from Pansur-na-pitu came in to shake hands.

Before dinner came a knock at the door: this was Mr. Johannsen, with his wife behind him, very soon followed by Mr. and Mrs. Nommensen. They only stayed a few minutes, and could not sit down, as all the seats were in the other house. In the afternoon Mrs. Johannsen came again alone, and we had coffee together in the balcony.

At 4 p.m. was a short funeral service in the church, and the burial took place just outside the garden. Then it was high time for every one to go, and Mr. and Mrs. Johannsen came to take leave.

Jan. 16.—The Nommensens are to leave to-day for Toba, and he has just been over here, the first time I have seen him to speak to since his first greeting on the 11th, as he has been regularly besieged by people every day and all day long, with hardly time even to eat.

He considers it all right my going to Sipoholon, so I shall probably leave the day after to-morrow. This is all very clear to me, and therefore very acceptable.

Jan. 20, *Sipoholon.*—Yesterday morning I arrived here in safety in the hanging bed. It was a little more than an hour's journey, a good road and a very beautiful one, as much as I could see in the rain. I was received by the Culemanns with the greatest kindness, the best corner in the sitting-room cleared out, and a bed put there where I can spend the day; the bedroom opening out of the sitting-room, and my chair-bed in the balcony, where I can

receive as many Batta women as like to come. They have never been encouraged to come here, as in Pea Radja, and this is, I believe, a specially barren soil, needing greatly some loving patient heart. As it is much larger than Pansur-na-pitu, it ought some day to produce fruit. On my first day here, to-day, I had this text, 'My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest,' Exod. xxxiii. 14. Not rest *from* change and difficulties, but that far better rest *in* them all, which I think we are experiencing more and more as time goes on.

Jan. 21.—A few women and men have been to call on me these two mornings, and we have had some very nice intercourse, but I have told Mr. Culemann I am very anxious to begin small and by degrees, without any outward pressure. These little visits are very helpful, that I may get acquainted with the people in a friendly way. Some seem glad to learn, some say that the girls have no time to learn. Two men have invited me in the most friendly way to visit their villages.

Feb. 2.—It gets more and more difficult to write, as events multiply since I came to Sipoholon. The district is immensely large—ten churches (which are also schools through the week), which means ten teachers, nine of whom are married. But I shall only have to do with eight of these wives, as one church is too far off, nearly a day's journey, and a very dangerous, difficult road. Mr. Culemann himself has only been there once, I believe, and actually the heathen there are still cannibals, and there are also some cannibals near Pea Radja and in Toba. I thought that this had quite died out; but it does not mean that they kill men for food (except, perhaps, in some special case of illness, when the sorcerer orders a 'human heart' as a remedy), but merely, in case of war, they kill and eat their enemies. In the district of Pea Radja there still lives a man, about ninety years old, one of

those who murdered and eat the first two missionaries in Sumatra: he has since been baptized.

Of these eight churches, four are two or three hours' distant, but the teachers' wives will come, if they can, each Wednesday afternoon, when I have a meeting for all teachers' and elders' wives, returning the next morning; the other women from those distant places I shall only be able to see occasionally on Thursday morning, if they come to the great weekly market here.

The immediate district in which my work lies consists of this church and congregation, and the three others on the other side of the river. But within half an hour's walk are more than a thousand women, reckoning the heathens, who form more than half, so that three-quarters of the women and girls who come to the meetings have to wade through the river; and as it is more than knee-deep for a man, I cannot imagine how the children get through. At this moment, however, the Dutch Government is building two bridges, which will make things easier.

The Sunday schools were not satisfactory. Now the girls are all to come to me in the little parish room, a small stone's-throw from this house, each group headed by its own female teacher. The first Sunday a hundred and twenty-nine came, the second a hundred and forty-two. It is impossible to tell if this is out of mere curiosity or not.

The first ten days I had no meetings in the week, except the Wednesday afternoons for the Christian workers, but lay in the balcony making acquaintance with the women, who came in twos and threes, or were brought by the elders in groups: so this resulted in an immense number of little informal meetings, which were extremely nice.

This week has begun the regular work among the mothers. I should have proposed their all coming the same morning, but the elders preferred each of the four districts having their separate morning. Nearly forty came on

Tuesday, and nearly fifty on Monday, and I had the greatest pleasure in speaking to them, even though it may soon change to nearly four or nearly five; and it is a special joy to find that much that has been said in a meeting is remembered, and can be talked over another day with the twos and threes in the balcony.

The work among the girls and children does not begin till next week, when I hope to have a night school four evenings and a day school Wednesday mornings. The rules for the night school are: all must know how to read a little, either Testament or spelling-book; not more than fifty can be admitted; any one absent a whole month must be struck off, that another may be admitted. Then all the children beyond the fifty, and all those who know nothing at all, can come Wednesday morning. Once a week seems dreadfully little for them, but nothing regular can be done Thursday morning because of the market, and there is no other day left free.

Yesterday was an overwhelmingly full day; with countless visits, including one from my dear blind Zachariah, from Pansur-na-pitu, who had never been before to Sipoholon, and knew no one here except myself. He dined in the kitchen, and read his raised type to the admiration of all around.

In the afternoon came Sister Thora for the first time, but just as I ought to have been taking the meeting. However, I felt utterly done up and incapable, so she took it for me, and upon that came my dear Solomon, also from Pansur-na-pitu, and had a cup of coffee in my bedroom after his three hours' walk, and gave me a most splendid account of their work, which is starting again in the old way, Mrs. Johannsen taking the girls' reading class. Mr. Johannsen too has also put his shoulder to the wheel, to give them a good start, and I feel that things will go on in the right spirit.

Feb. 6.—We have arranged for the four teachers' wives to come on Saturday morning before breakfast, that they may prepare for the Sunday school lesson, and may learn how best to teach the text to the children.

Mr. Culemann has found me a young man named Andreas to help in teaching the night school, and he helps also a little in the morning meetings. Unfortunately he is not very quick at picking up a tune, but he has the work at heart, and Mr. Culemann had long been wishing to use him as an evangelist, so that is the main point.

A blind man has turned up here from one of the outlying districts. He heard about the visit of Zachariah, and his reading the raised type, and came to hear more about it. In three lessons he has learnt the whole alphabet, and is beginning to put syllables together, so I trust it may be a great blessing and joy to him.

Feb. 9.—My most beloved woman, Tabina, and the friend, Martha, whom she has so greatly influenced for good, have just come to see me from Pansur-na-pitu—that long three hours' walk—and she had never been to Sipoholon in her life, but said the way did not seem long for the joy that it was to come. They had actually been once to Pea Radja to see me, but arrived the day after I had left!

I told you that all the girls who know nothing (of whom there must be some hundred) could come to me on Wednesday mornings, so yesterday I braced myself up for a rather confused scrimmage, and this is what happened. At 10.30 a.m. appeared five meek little girls, who came to me on the balcony, politely shook hands, and silently sat down to be taught: four were small, but one, a size larger, turned out to be a night scholar, the daughter of a chief, who had come to bring and to help her small companions, who were all from one village, five scholars in all, making just the kind of beginning that I liked. Andreas was

there to help, and being so few we remained in the balcony and had a very good hour, and to their great joy all their names were written down, just as if they were night scholars! . . .

Dr. Schreiber says that by his advice Miss Dimbleby [1] is to join a Dutch missionary society, and go to a hospital in Java! This is a blow to us here. We have begun collecting planks, and hoped to build the new Princess House some little distance from here in a more central situation; but, without Miss Dimbleby to join me, it is a question if I could undertake such a responsibility. My text for the day, after reading this news, was, 'He shall choose our inheritance for us' (Ps. xlvii. 4): a very happy reminder! The whole Psalm, too, hanging as it were upon this central keystone, is so grandly cheerful and praiseful (and no wonder), that it is as good as a tonic to read it.

The night school is a great delight, and Andreas is really a good helper, and begins to get on with the singing. More than forty girls gave in their names and have come very regularly; about ten for the first class, who can read the Testament a little, and about thirty second class, who can only manage the spelling-book, and this is our order of proceeding. At say 7 p.m., when all are assembled, Andreas opens with singing and prayer, while I am having supper in here; then he comes to fetch the cushions, &c., and we go together, and find the thirty ready waiting with their spelling-books, and the ten sitting near my bed, with slates on which the copies are already written, writing and arithmetic on alternate days. The latter for the younger ones means merely writing figures, that they may be able to find chapter and verse when reading. They bring their slates to me one by one, that I may see how they get on, and everything is very quiet and orderly. In half an hour

[1] A member of the London Princess House. She went to Sipoholon after all, sailing May 6, as will be seen later on.

I sound the whistle, and the two monitors for the week wash the slates and distribute Testaments to the first class, put by the spelling-books in a nice cupboard (which I bought for the purpose), and supply the second class with slates and pencils. For half an hour they write, while we read, and then the slates are again washed, &c.

Then they all stand and sing a verse of a hymn before the half-hour's Bible lesson, our happiest time, when the second class also come near the bed, that we may be all together. When that is over, the names are called and entered, and Andreas gives a short lesson. Between nine and half-past we close with prayer, the cushions and I come home, and the girls lie down in a mass on some of the mats, reserving one or two more to cover them collectively, and so they sleep!

Next day at sunrise the monitors sweep the room, Andreas comes for singing and a short prayer, and then they leave, but not without, of their own accord, collecting outside my window, where they wait till I open it and say, 'Good morning'!

Feb. 19.—Now I must really finish this letter with loud and long and heartfelt praise for God's *wonderful* guiding and grace! He has indeed set His seal upon that most difficult step of leaving the beloved Pansur-na-pitu, with its quietness and order, and coming to such a station as this, and though I am still always lying down, with four beds in daily use, it is evident that I must be much stronger, being able to tell out the ever fresh and blessed Gospel at eleven meetings a week!

Feb. 23.—'Every joy He sends me comes a sweet and glad surprise.' The newest is the power He is giving me of translating some of Sankey's hymns into Batta. The musical capacity of the Battas is simply marvellous, considering they never sang a note till the Europeans came. Every Tuesday evening Petrus, the boys' teacher, gives my

girls a singing lesson. There are no picked singers, but all the forty odd are expected to sing; all the big girls are taught the alto, and all the others the soprano, and he conducts it all without any instrument. So far, however, they know nothing of singing soft or loud: a correct ear, but no feeling.

The unspeakably sad part of the whole is that the one thing needful, the Holy Spirit, seems always absent. Speaking generally, it is as if everything is being done for the Battas which can be done without the Holy Spirit; but how can we dare to call anything Christianity as long as that Spirit of Christ is absent? Many of the missionaries themselves are painfully aware of this. Mr. Johannsen was specially so, and very many tears have they shed, and prayers offered. It may be, however, that that blessed Spirit is working imperceptibly, like the growth underground, and our successors will see what is hid from our eyes. At any rate we can be thankful that so many are willing to come within the sound of the Gospel, and to keep away for a little while from the spiritual filth of their villages.

Not only is the night school a continual joy, four evenings a week for girls, but the children's meetings also, three mornings a week for the younger ones. From the small beginning of five scholars they have increased each time till now they are fourteen, besides three girls from the night school, who enjoy coming too.

During Lent, however, our arrangements are altered a little, to suit the Wednesday service in church: the children, instead of coming to lessons, assemble outside to come with me to church; as that new great joy, after nine months, was given me yesterday, the first Wednesday in Lent. The chief places in the synagogues are greatly against my principles, so I am allowed to have a broad bench down among the people, which with cushions

makes a capital bed. The church was very well filled, though chiefly with school children, and I had the pleasure of being in the midst of my day and night scholars and of worshipping God in His holy house.

A proof that the night school is appreciated is that a sister of one of our teachers here from Huta Barat, an hour's distance from this station, has come to live with her brother for the sake of joining it.

March 9.—An elder from Pansur-na-pitu has just come to visit me, and says that rather *more* women come to the meetings now than when I was there. It did do my heart good to hear him. Also a most beloved heathen woman from here has just been for the third time to see me: that is, I believe, truly an anxious soul: she comes regularly to the meetings, and asks so many questions, and remembers so well. Her husband was not willing to be baptized, but she wanted to be so herself very much, and to-day she tells me that he too is willing, and the teacher has been to see them, and has begun instructing them.

Another woman, too, a thorough heathen, was brought to our last meeting by a good Christian old woman, who always comes when she can manage to crawl so far with her stick: this one had never been either to church or meeting in her life, and quite shuddered when she was shown a Bible picture, thinking it was some incantation! The nice part is that they go home and tell others what they have heard. A man whom I knew slightly happened to call yesterday, so I asked if his wife was at the class on Friday, as I do not know her by sight, and if she repeated to him what she heard? Yes, she was there, and she did repeat it, and it was about Jesus being led by the Dove (the Spirit) into the wilderness. This was a great encouragement to go on sowing in faith. Then one morning at sunrise a woman happened to be in the court, and saw my forty-five scholars assemble outside

my bedroom, arranging themselves in four rows under the direction of the head monitor, and as I opened my window she heard our short singing and prayer together, and as soon as they dispersed she came up to the window and said, 'I do like to see those young girls; there was nothing of that sort before you came.'

March 21.—On Thursdays I live in the balcony, wondering who will be sent to come and see me, and feeling that whoever comes is specially sent for a purpose. Last Thursday it was Bartimeus, with three companions from Si Massom, a walk of four hours and a half; but he would not go all the way back the same day, and Solomon came with him from Pansur-na-pitu. Another Thursday a woman was sent by Sister Thora for a talk, one whom I had learnt to know a little in Pea Radja.

Such a number of women come to the Wednesday services, as well as men, as there is no service in the other three churches; so they all come to this, the mother church. It is a touching sight, as they seem, in their simple ignorant way, to be feeling after something better; and yet I fear they understand hardly anything of what is preached.

My back is much better. I can go to church now on Sunday as well as Wednesday (began last Sunday), and can go to the bath-house in the garden as often as I like, and quite enjoy the little walk.

March 28.—In reading *Service for the King* for February I was interested to learn 'two of the greatest essentials for a missionary life,' and glad to find that I possessed them both, 'a sense of utter unworthiness and insufficiency, and a willing heart'; but then came the qualification above all others, 'Divine love,' and of this one has to learn more every day. However, I certainly do love these dear Batta people—women, girls, and children.

Last Sunday I was reminded of the verses 'I shot an arrow into the air.' A woman whom I did not know

called, and asked many questions sorrowfully about my leaving Pansur-na-pitu: and said she lived at Huta Barat, and used to come sometimes on Wednesdays, instead of her mother-in-law, to bring rice for one of the students. 'And some of the teaching there has remained in my heart,' she said; 'and I have come to-day because I want to hear more.' I asked what it was that had entered her heart, and she said, 'You asked what name we had received at baptism, and we told you our names; but you said you did not mean that, but the one name by which we were all called, *Christian*. Then you asked us what was the name of our Lord, and we said Jesus; but you said you did not mean that name, but the other one, Christ, and that as our name was now like His name, so must our life also be like His life.' I should think it must be quite a year since I gave that lesson, and now I come to Sipoholon and find it 'in the heart of a friend'! She has a sister living here, it seems, so I hope she may come again some day.

April 4.—And now our happy Easter time is over, and yesterday, Easter Monday, I was in the church for service and Holy Communion, for which about a hundred and fifty remained, and I was able to go up to the Communion Table with them. This is a pleasure I have not had since a year last January. Our Good Friday service was also very nice: such a full church, and my night scholars sat, by Mr. Culemann's direction, in the chancel, and sang a special Good Friday hymn, arranged for three voices, which they had practised beforehand; but on Easter Sunday the church was nearly crowded out, galleries and chancel all full, and Mr. Culemann himself had hardly room to move, as the three other congregations all assembled in this church for the occasion. Probably a thousand were present.

April 13.—I received a letter the other day from the two leper girls in Sipirok, though not of course written

by themselves. The younger sister I have never seen; it was the elder one, Maria, who was in Pansur-na-pitu formerly. This is the translation:—'A greeting to you, dear mother. I often remember your love, and I remember you in my prayers. May our Lord bless your work, and give you strength for it. He provides for us here food and clothing all sufficient; but I still keep the garment you gave me, though it has got old. As to us, we have received the Lord's Supper from Pandita Petrus, and we rejoice that we are made partakers of the Lord's body and blood. Receive a greeting from us, Maria and Sindang.' I believe those two are the only Christians in that little leper settlement: the rest either Mohammedans or heathens.

As to the Mohammedans, after many efforts to establish themselves in Silindung, they have just succeeded in so far that they are now erecting a mosque in Mr. Kessel's district. It will be, I think, a helpful as well as interesting work to prepare, not against but for their coming, and our prayers ought to be earnest and united that a blessing may come to them from this contact with Christianity. May we learn to love *them* while steadfastly rejecting their teaching, and above all fortify ourselves by a thorough knowledge of, and reverence for, the New Testament, bringing everything to the test of God's Word. This is my great aim with my night-scholars.

April 15.—Now I must tell you what a delightful winding-up we had last evening to the ten weeks' term of the night school: fifty names were entered in the book, and the average attendance four nights a week has been forty-two, so it was with all my heart that I made arrangements for a happy evening. They came at the usual time, and sat in rows of ten, and Andreas and the two young women teachers served out to them and to us a cup of lemonade and two fancy biscuits each, of course beginning with singing and prayer, and a hymn

at the end. Then the examination began, the history of our Lord up to the time of His choosing His apostles; and the six pictures used during the term were all hung up, as pleasant reminders for them to look at: and the way they answered surpassed all my expectations. Mr. Culemann came in near the beginning, just as they were repeating a long text by heart, but it did not put them out at all, and in the course of the examination they repeated seven texts (always quoting chapter and verse), which I told them were like little lights on the heavenward path; and having placed seven little tapers on a shelf by my side, I lighted one each time they had repeated a text, so we had quite a little illumination. Two other teachers were present, and after Mr. Culemann had given a short address to the girls, Mrs. Culemann also came in, and the girls sang in parts 'The Light of the World is Jesus.' and another hymn. One of the teachers prayed at the close, and we finished with a hymn of praise.

May 8.—One morning the door opened, and who should I see but our dear old servant lad Manasse, from Pansur-napitu, who had brought a note to the Culemanns from the Johannsens, proposing to come here the same day and stay till Monday! I could hardly believe it, and they arrived before five o'clock. We had not met once since the few minutes' interview at Pea Radja the day of their arrival from Europe, four months before! It was a very happy visit on the whole, and the Sunday morning service was splendid, more than a thousand present, as the other three churches were shut up for the occasion, and Mr. Johannsen preached. It was indeed good to see such a crowd of such people kept awake and quiet, and positively *made* to remember and understand something of God's love, and of the practical use of reading the Bible.

I have proposed, if all is well, and Sister Kate (Miss Dimbleby) really comes, as is likely, to go with her on

a long visit to Pansur-na-pitu in the weeding season. It is grand to hear how the work goes on there ; Mr. Johannsen tells me there are often a hundred people at the Saturday prayer-meeting! The extreme kindness and constant love that I receive here from the Culemanns is also a cause of deepest thankfulness, though they do much more than is necessary.

It is wonderful how much work there has been to do during this five weeks' holiday for the harvest, full as much as eyes and strength would allow—reading Batta, both Old and New Testaments, with as much as I can manage of the various English and German magazines, writing, colouring engravings for the night school, making a patchwork cushion (the admiration of all beholders), preparing patchwork and attendance books for night school, preparing series of Bible lessons for the new term, having many and long visits from girls and women or men.

It is beautiful to see that the Holy Spirit is beginning to work in the hearts of some of the girls. With Esther (now one of my under teachers) it has been most touching to watch her constant devotion. It is always she who does all the extra bits of work, helping Andreas to carry my cushions, sweeping the mission room (though the monitresses ought to do it, and were willing), helping to teach the children on Sunday, and coming to see me whenever there was an excuse. So one day I asked if she had given her heart to Christ, or rather to find out by thought and prayer if this was the case or not, and then to come back and tell me. A few days later she returned, and told me distinctly she *had* done so, which for a Batta was remarkable, as they are generally satisfied to be baptized, and then leave all the rest to God, quite uncertain whether their path leads upward or downward, but casting all the blame of their sins upon God.

Well, then I asked her to go home and find out from John i. what the first disciple, Andrew, did as soon as *he* had given his heart to Christ. After some days she returned again, apparently not having understood; but even as I was explaining how he had brought another one to Christ, another girl, Martha (also a member of the first class), appeared at the door, having been invited by Esther to come, 'that she might hear beautiful words from the lady'; so half-unconsciously she had done the very thing that I meant! I put the same question to Martha, and some days after I had a most earnest time alone with her on the balcony.

June 5.—The Sunday school goes on growing and growing, till yesterday week as many as two hundred and ten scholars managed to squeeze their way in. As I entered the mission room nothing was to be seen but one sea of heads without a break, and it was quite difficult not to tread them under feet, as all the girls sit on the floor. It was evident that some change must be made, so yesterday Mr. Culemann turned all the boys' school out of the church, and sent them off to the next village, and the girls joyfully took their place.

We have started our new needlework lesson with the first class, and the patchwork is a great success; they also quite like the thought of making it into a quilt for the poor leper girl here, whom they all know about, so I ventured a step farther, and said, 'Why not make her a jacket too, and why not you buy the stuff? Whatever money you give, I will give the same, and it will be our joint present';—this as an encouragement. I made no collection, as I wanted each to feel free to give or not, as she felt inclined. I think I told you that sixteen Batta coins go to a penny, and I did not expect more than perhaps four coins each (they only give one coin to a church collection), and that only the first class would

give, but I was mistaken. First Esther came with eight coins, and I believe they all (the sixty) gave something. Then, without my saying a word about it, several of the little day scholars gave from four to eight coins each. So altogether I received about half a crown, which with my own share and about a shilling which I had to start with, was much more than we could possibly spend! It was indeed a most happy and almost bewildering experience, and we have bought some dark print and a reel of cotton, and some strong stuff to line the quilt, and there will still be more than three shillings left to give her in money.

It is true that one little girl did not at all know to whom she was giving her money; but another, when asked, answered directly, 'To the Lord Jesus.' 'Yes,' I said, 'to His representative on earth, the poor and the sick.'

June 16.—Last Friday I had an attack of weakness, which prevented my taking the women's Bible class, and I said to myself, 'If I can only hold out till Miss Dimbleby comes!' About an hour later came a letter from her, saying she hoped to sail on May 6, and therefore at that moment she must almost have reached Padang!

That was joyful news indeed; and another joyful thing is that Sister Thora has promised (I asked her) to go to Siboga, forty miles, to fetch the new sister from there—a difficult journey for one who does not know the language, as they will have to sleep at a Batta inn halfway, though in going there Sister Thora means to ride the whole distance in one day.

June 21.—Now here am I, resting at ease, after the children's meeting this morning and the meeting of elders' wives this afternoon, and waiting for some older girls to come this evening for writing, while two brave sisters are coming nearer and nearer to each other, Siboga being the goal of each. Sister Thora, who in my eyes is a heroine as well as a saint, started I suppose at five this morning on

horseback from Pea Radja, accompanied only by two native men on foot, for her ride of forty miles, only stopping at the halfway inn to exchange her tired horse and men for fresh ones, as her destination must be reached by daylight, because of the fearfully dangerous road near Siboga. A week or two ago a man was smashed to death there by the earth giving way under his feet; a bridge has broken down, and there is only a buffalo track left, or a single plank laid across a chasm; to say nothing of the tigers and of the convicts who work on the roads. None of the missionaries have ever themselves ventured to do the whole distance in one day, but she could not sleep in that inn alone.

June 27.—And now she is come, more quickly, I believe, than any other sister or brother before her, and she actually walked into this room quite unexpected by me, for I did not even hear the horses outside! The fact was we had received no letter from Siboga, because Sister Thora managed everything so beautifully that they only remained there two nights, and came as quickly as a letter. It is indeed beautiful to have Sister Kate here, and my bedroom is so large that with the help of a screen it makes two quite nice rooms.

She was almost overwhelmed on Sunday at the sight of the Sunday school, having never seen such a thing before: nearly three hundred girls sitting in rows, quiet, bright, obedient and attentive, their teachers being four elder girls, four wives of the schoolmasters, and myself.

Such a mercy that Sister Kate was able to get here so soon, as for the last two days Mrs. Culemann has been seriously ill in bed, and is no better now: it is fever. It is also perhaps good that this unexpected household work has been given her, as it would not do to plunge too suddenly into our thirteen Batta meetings a week. The foul air and smells would be hardly endurable, and might

produce an illness. Even for me, with three and a half years' training, it is not always easy.

July 13.—It is beautiful to begin to see the fruit of the night school, not only the continued regular attendance of the girls, but that they are learning obedience: and a little inner circle is being formed of those who are training as Sunday school teachers: it consists now of seven elder girls. I had invited the three who have become teachers to come to me Wednesday evenings, when there is no school, to learn needlework and writing with ink; I invited no one else, as I didn't want a large meeting, but the other four came of themselves, and all seem quiet, earnest girls—some about twenty years old, I should say; and they have all called on me separately for quiet talk and prayer, wishing to give their hearts to God.

July 24.—Such a happy Sunday again yesterday, though born out of a sorrow. First the pleasure of being able to get to church in the morning (which is not always the case), then the multitude of girls in the afternoon hearing about the law of love given by Jesus, and learning His two new commandments by heart. Last Friday night two of the elder girls had been quarrelling after we left them, which made the message of love specially solemn; and I felt that some notice must be taken of it before the night school opened again the next day, so I spoke separately to the two offenders, and asked them to come and see me together later in the afternoon, which only one promised to do.

However, the result was really amusing, for they both came accompanied by a friend each, like two duellists with their seconds; and not only that, but a fifth girl came. 'Has she been quarrelling too?' I said. 'No, but it was on account of her that the quarrel arose.' So the duellists and their seconds sat down, and the bone of contention sat down in the middle! It was evident they meant to turn

this room into a law court, and begin a series of mutual accusations; so I said that was by no means my own intention, that I merely invited them that we might humble ourselves together before God, and ask His forgiveness for having broken the law of love, which we did; and then the contending parties shook hands, and they departed, including the 'bone.'

So that matter ended happily, and the day had a charming finish, as a little later on Sister Kate saw about thirty girls lingering under a tree, apparently waiting for her to walk out with them, as she had done with a few the Sunday before; and they all started off together in great delight, singing their new hymn, and the sun was set before they returned.

July 27.—We have just had a new great joy and interest. Eleven of the night scholars have heathen parents, and have never been baptized, so after specially bringing the subject forward for a week, I invited those to stay behind the following morning who would like to give in their names for baptism, which they all did. Then, some time later, I invited them to stay behind in the same way (at about six in the morning) for special instruction with us on the balcony, to be repeated every Tuesday morning; and again all responded, and we had a delightful meeting.

This brings me in contact with exactly the most ignorant girls in the second, third, and fourth classes, which is just what I wanted. I took the subject of Jesus seeking lost souls; and on asking what they would do in their villages, supposing one of their earthen pots was lost, I was struck with their unexpected, but no doubt truthful answer, 'We should curse.' Yes, that is just the village life, in one word.

Sept. 10.— . . . Before the latter part of May, I had actually sat in a chair for breakfast, with a pillow at my

back, thirteen days in succession. I have not attempted this again, but for about two months now I have had no relapse, and feel delightfully well in comparison with the past.

It seems to me I ought to be singing Hallelujah every moment of every day, to think that I am able to be in luxury and comfort, and have everything necessary done for me, when so many poor things with bad spines cannot afford to lie down, and so they get worse and worse.

It is such a comfort, too, to have my bedroom always properly seen to since Sister Kate came; as besides putting my bed straight and doing a very little dusting, I cannot empty a basin or do anything else for myself.

I showed the picture of the Crucifixion which you sent, to the Monday women first: fourteen were present, and to some of them it seemed quite like a new revelation; and they seemed quite awestruck to realize the bodily suffering, and also the sorrow of the Lord's mother. At the close, too, as they spoke together about the wicked people who crucified Jesus, it was very nice to hear a teacher's wife say to them, 'But *we* are the wicked people.'

A well-built wooden house, which I bought so as to use the materials, has during the last few days been taken to pieces and brought here, a most interesting sight. The walls were brought entire—more than sixty men arrived together carrying one; and all this they did without payment, urged on by an old chieftain whose wife and daughter are most constant attendants at the meetings; and a man remarked to him, 'It seems that Sipoholon is converted, for such a thing as this could never have been done formerly!'

That was a beautiful thing to hear, but only from two districts out of our four was this help given, and most certainly Sipoholon still needs to be converted.

Sept. 23.—And now actually the skeleton of our Princess House is standing in its place, and looks beautiful. First

the temporary mission house had to be removed to its new place, bodily lifted up and carried for perhaps ten yards or so! The men are so busy now with field work that they had to come, about two hundred, on a moonlight evening, brought together and encouraged by the alternate sounding of the church bell and the old Batta cymbals, which used only to be used at heathen feasts. The four or five principal chiefs worked with a will, and in about two hours the thing was accomplished, with much noise.

And all this free-will labour! Actually fourteen of our elder girls undertook of their own free will to fetch the large stones required as the foundation. They made two journeys to fetch the stones, carrying one apiece each time, and Andreas went with them, also helping; but although we knew of it beforehand, they went so early and so quietly that we knew nothing at the time, and missed the pleasure of seeing and thanking them, and I hardly even know who the fourteen were!

Sept. 29.—Four years to-day since that brilliant, beautiful, never-to-be-forgotten Sunday, St. Michael and All Angels, my last Sunday and Bible class in London, with the Communion in All Saints' Church, and my room full of flowers—such a wonderful sunshiny time to look back upon. And yet the path shineth more and more unto that perfect day which we can now only faintly imagine; but in the meantime we are saved daily by the shining of His face!

Oct. 8.—Our lovely Princess House is advancing by slow degrees. It has no walls or floor, but they are beginning to put the wooden shingles on the roof, and I can actually see the men at work as I lie on the bed in my bedroom! As soon as the roof is finished it may possibly come to a standstill for something like three months, during the weeding season, so we shall not get in for a long time.

Oct. 17.—Mr. and Mrs. Culemann and their children have

gone away for three or four weeks. This is the first time for more than four years that I have felt myself really free to exercise any hospitality; and so this is a new and very great pleasure, and has been put into use instantly. The very day they went away, two of our girls came to help in winnowing some rice for us, and we were able to make them happy with milk and bread and butter.

The next day came the two teachers, and on Monday afternoon we had a most beautiful coffee party on the verandah. The five great chiefs of Sipoholon all came by invitation; and the verandah looked quite nice for their reception—five chairs set out for them, and a white cloth spread on a box for a table, and we gave them bread and butter and coffee. The object of the meeting was that I might thank them personally for the great help they gave in removing the old mission house to make room for the Princess House. It was those five who brought together the two hundred men, and they themselves worked perhaps harder than any of their subjects; and they did it all without payment, and came and went without my having even the opportunity of seeing and thanking them.

So we talked about that first, and about the Princess House in London; and after coffee we showed them that large beautiful picture of the Crucifixion that you sent out, so that they, as kings, might get better acquainted with the King of kings, and notice the difference between their crowns and His (for those five all wear the gold band round their caps, given by the Government); and they seemed greatly impressed with the picture. We sang a hymn which says, 'Who is the King of kings?' and one of the chiefs, who I believe is a real Christian (they are all nominal Christians), took the closing prayer.

They came about four and went away about six, and wished they had been invited at noon, so as to have more time for talk! This wish, however, I could not echo, as

I know the Battas are always ready to talk for ever: what is wanted is a life to correspond with the talk.

Oct. 29.—The leper girl's much-needed new house was completely built and finished by some of the Christian men in less than a fortnight, with not one unnecessary delay, though in many difficulties, and all our eight Thursday morning girls have now begun visiting her; they are to go in turns, two and two, on Sundays, which no doubt will be as much blessed to them as to her. Hers is not an infectious leprosy, so I don't see why she has to live alone.

Nov. 4.—It is now three weeks since Mr. and Mrs. Culemann went to pay visits in Toba, and left us to look after the station. Happily God has been looking after it for us, and also been reminding us of the blessing of resting in Him and the curse of resting on an arm of flesh, for our Batta friends are not very reliable.

One day, when we were quite alone, an unknown heathen chief came in and sat himself down in a chair in the sitting-room: he asked for medicine, and would hardly take a refusal, though we said we had none to give; he had several followers, one of whom also sat down in here, and we heard afterwards that they are still cannibals in his district, though it is almost within sight of this place.

Another day a party of Dutch soldiers arrived, and asked for Mr. Culemann, but I don't know what they wanted of him.

Nov. 8.—Mr. and Mrs. Purdy and their Malay servant came on Monday. It had been already arranged that Mr. Purdy would show his magic lantern in the church on Monday evening, so we had the notice given out on Sunday in all the four churches of Sipoholon, and many hundreds of people came. They were New Testament pictures; and as he only speaks Malay, Andreas inter-

preted for him, and did it very well. The great crowd of people behaved admirably, the singing most hearty and united, and the whole thing very impressive and helpful.

I have told you of Esther, one of the first to give in her name last February for the night school. I am not sure if she has missed one single night's attendance, she has been a teacher there now for more than five months, and her personal loving devotion is something quite touching; if, on wet nights, I slip off my slippers and walk home barefoot, she is sure to linger about to fetch the water and wash my feet.

Nov. 12.—We have twice again had the magic lantern in church; there must have been two thousand there. The whole place, including galleries, was completely packed, and people beating at the doors outside and being told they could not get in. Mr. Purdy at one time was afraid of a panic and of the children getting crushed. As for me, I was thankful when it was safely over, as half the people here are heathens, and not very particular what they do. Also my bed was shaken the whole evening, by people sitting up against it, whereas my pet aversion is having anybody touching my bed, as it is the nerves of the spine that seem to be out of order. However, it was very nice that so many people cared to come, and I hope and believe they got some good by it; we had Old Testament slides that time. The same night our fowl-house was broken into and two ducks stolen, also two branches of bananas and the key of the bath-house! On Thursday Mr. Purdy went to the market and sold about forty portions of Scripture, and yesterday evening we had the third set of slides, 'Pilgrim's Progress.'

Nov. 14.—Yesterday it was pouring down a steady flood of rain all afternoon and evening, and in the midst of it all Mrs. Purdy saw two people on horseback, who proved to be Mr. and Mrs. Culemann coming back from Toba, the

three children following in a chair. Poor things, they were tired and wet, and their luggage was wet too, so Sister Kate stayed at home to do all she could for them, while I went to the night school.

Mr. and Mrs. Purdy had breakfast at six o'clock this morning, and then they went off to Toba; and we all four feel that we have had a very happy eight days together.

Nov. 18.—Now the examinations are over, and we have had a most splendid time—last night was the best of all. The old mission room looked beautiful with all the pictures put up that had been used in the half-year, and the large and gorgeous patchwork quilt which they had made for the leper girl was pinned up before the cupboard, and her jacket also was displayed.

Pansur-na-pitu, Nov. 22.—We left Sipoholon the day before yesterday, Sister Kate on horseback, I carried on a bed, and after two hours arrived at Simarangkir, where we spent the day, and slept there, and this morning came on here, where we hope to stay for two months during the weeding season.

Dec. 1.—I am glad to be at the old home again, though, of course, everything is so changed that it hardly feels like home. What makes me glad is the feeling that God really meant me to come, and had prepared a work for me.

Dec. 11.—It is most interesting to compare the spiritual and mental condition of these women with the six former ones amongst whom I worked during my first two years here. We seem to start on quite a higher platform. This is very specially the case with the three out of Silindung who used to come to our monthly meetings, and who have since been under Sister Thora's influence. These three can all write nicely, and have read the whole New Testament through from beginning to end, and can repeat the names of all the books of the New Testament, and take an

intelligent interest in what they read; and all of them are able to do needlework. The first set were more like children who had everything to learn, and began by holding their books topsy-turvy!

Dec. 20.—My spine had been rather worse, so, the other day, to avoid the hard bench in the sitting-room, I kept on my bed for breakfast, with the door wide open, so as to see the beautiful view. It was the first time for nearly a month that I had had the opportunity of lying opposite a beautiful view, so I got the door set as wide open as it would go; but alas! the whole valley was full of mist, and nothing but one grey sheet was to be seen. In one sense it seemed fitting enough, as some things had been rather difficult lately, and matched the landscape, but I felt sure by waiting, the sun would come out, and I would not take my eyes off till it came to pass, slowly but surely, and at last the whole valley was one blaze of light and beauty. This was all coming to pass while the other people were having their family prayers after breakfast and their usual spiritual teaching, but I felt that this once the best teaching had been set apart for me. A few minutes later I received and was reading your letter of Oct. 29, saying that you and Miss C. had been praying that some special blessing might be given me, and I felt that it had just been granted.

Dec. 26.—Christmas Day came and went with a beauty all its own. How well our Father knows how to give ever fresh joys and blessings! A year ago my joy had been preparing many—perhaps three hundred—what I looked upon as parting gifts. This year there were almost no presents given, and hardly any outward preparations. It was arranged for the six teachers and Mr. Johannsen, and perhaps a few others, to spread themselves over the district, two and two, carrying the glad tidings to the many villages, but there seemed nothing for me to do, when it suddenly came into my heart that

perhaps I could do the wonderful thing of visiting the six teachers' wives in their own houses, supposing they possessed beds on which one could lie, as the row of houses is only half a minute's walk from here. Bartimeus looked in just as I was revolving this matter in my brain, so I sent him to inspect, thinking that if only one family possessed a bedstead I might make one visit do for all, though that would not have been half so nice, as my object was to have a tiny little dedication service with each woman, surrounded by her own children, and to commit house and household individually to the King whose birthday we were celebrating. Bartimeus came back with a delightful report, that they wanted me in each house, and he thought it could be managed, as, though there was only one bedstead, there were plenty of mattresses which could be spread on the floor. Happily, too, Sister Kate could go with me, and we actually got through the whole row with no evil effects, but with very much joy and very warm welcomes.

They have on the average three children each, and it was so pretty to see the quite little things, sitting so still, with folded hands, whilst they were being prayed for by name, and in three houses there was a little nurse maid, too, or nurse boy. We stayed about ten minutes with each, but it certainly was a tremendous business to get down on the floor and then up again six times in succession. Apparently there was a mattress in each house, as everywhere it was all ready for us; but this turned out not to be the case, as Sister Kate caught sight of a mattress being carried from one house to another to be ready before we came. Two of the teachers came home before we had finished, and the astonishment of one of them must have been great, on entering his little home, to see some one lying full length on a mattress on the floor, and looking very much at home there!

We have heard that our Princess House is now finished at Sipoholon, our second Princess House in Sumatra! This is very nice news, but the little kitchen, a separate building, is not yet built, so it is not as yet ready for us to start our housekeeping.

Jan. 4, 1894.—It is not the custom here to have midnight services on New Year's Eve, so for the last few years I have been alone in my room on those occasions; but this time I invited Sister Kate to join me, not in my room, which with a mere plank wall could hardly be called private, but in the Princess House, and we had a most beautiful time together, from 11 p.m. to 12.30 a.m., abundantly uttering the memory of His great goodness, and singing of His righteousness.

It certainly has been a most wonderful year of unspeakable blessing; it was so delightful to recall the blessings of one month after another from January till December.

CHAPTER VII

LIFE IN THE SECOND SUMATRA PRINCESS HOUSE

January 28, *to October* 18, 1894.

'Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.'—2 Sam. xv. 15.

Princess House, Sipoholon, Jan. 28, 1894.—Now we have actually taken possession of our second Sumatra Princess House, and have slept here two nights; such a dear home-like place it seems already! But everything in its right order.

My birthday being on the twenty-third, I arranged to leave on the twenty-second, as we were to sleep one night on the road; the weather was beautiful, and the hour's journey to Simarangkir so exquisitely lovely that I should have liked it to have been twice as long. The next morning, directly after breakfast, we started again, and again the weather was as exquisite as the scenery, and many thoughts and many joys accompanied us on the way, during our two hours more; Sister Kate on in front on a borrowed horse, I behind on the bed, carried by four men, with a nice opportunity of speaking to them about the *rest* of *soul* for those who come to Christ.

It seemed all such a quiet, lovely, God-sent birthday time, when I saw in the distance a group of about forty girls, and as I was wondering who it could be, they all began singing one of our sweet hymns, and then I knew it must be our

NIGHT SCHOOL AT SIPOHOLON, SHOWING SISTER KATE AND ANDREAS.

own girls come to meet us! This was really the most natural thing in the world, being the usual Batta custom, but God Himself must have made me forget, so as to give me a birthday surprise. Indeed, it was so sudden and unexpected that the tears came into my eyes as we came to a standstill, and there they all were, with Andreas and Lukas, singing a hymn of praise, and the last half-hour of the way we were in the very midst of them, the little day-scholars mostly with Sister Kate, the elder night-scholars mostly with me, and we held each other's hands and looked into each other's faces as we went along, and my hair grew as rough as a haystack, as I turned my head on the pillow, always wanting to see the girls on both sides! Then as we went on by the river-side, Andreas pointed out to me the leper-girl standing by a tree the other side of the river, she also having left her house to come and greet us!

So, in the arms of love, coming from one beautiful work to another, we arrived in Sipoholon to find the new house practically finished. Sister Kate is as busy as a bee all day long, faithfully helping our dear Esther, who has really actually come to live with us, and be our companion and sister and servant all in one. The front of our house looks directly on the river and the mountains beyond; the back looks on mountains, with several little villages buried in palm-trees.

Feb. 7.—Oh, how I wish you could see our mission room, for it is really splendid, especially at night, when between sixty and seventy girls (eighty came the first night) are all assembled in their five classes, as the night school was begun again two weeks ago!

The room is about 40 feet long by 22 feet wide, very light and lovely by day, with six windows on one side and four on the other, and a lovely view on both sides, but also very cheerful and well lighted at night with five hanging lamps. The girls come four nights a week as before. Having taken

the Gospel history last year, we are going through the Acts this year. Sister Kate is now the regular teacher of the second class, and Andreas helps me or makes himself generally useful. When the fourth half-hour is over, he calls over the names, and we close with a short prayer. Then most of them are sent out by the end door, while the remaining few arrange the mats for the night. When all are returned and seated, we have a few minutes of silent prayer, one verse of an evening hymn, a general 'Good-night!' and then a kind of general settlement and general 'buzz,' which it is impossible to hush; last night seventy-five were present, and *all* seemed to have something to say to their neighbours; some strip off their jackets, and tuck an extra garment round them, and all stretch themselves full length on the long mats, drawing the end over them, so as to cover a whole lot together, till by degrees they become quite invisible, and the only thing the eye rests on is a seething mass of matting, rippling up and down as they move their bodies underneath.

"Then at last we leave the scene, carrying away the last lamp with us, and retire to my room to pray together for our girls and ourselves before we go to sleep. As soon as light dawns next morning I have to be up, so that the moment I hear them begin to sing in the mission room, I can go in to lead them in the Lord's Prayer, and dismiss all except two who remain in turn to sweep the room.

Sipoholon, Silindung, April 21.—Now a little more about the night school. These girls often remind me, in a mild way, of the wild factory girls at Walworth. If we forget to bolt one of the window-shutters, they will climb into the mission room that way, all in the dark. Then we say no one must come in for the future till they see a light. Accordingly, a few nights later there was a loud knocking outside the door, and on going into the mission room to

light a lamp, we found to our extreme surprise that one was already lighted! The girls have a dreadful habit of carrying matches about with them, and as we had left one of the doors unbolted, no doubt a girl crept softly in with her bare feet, lit the lamp, and went out again, and then they all knocked in the most humble, innocent way, asking for admission!

It is so beautiful to be able at last to exercise hospitality as we can do here, especially to our Batta friends. For instance, the other day, there came a poor widow from a long distance to get medicine for her eyes; the late husband had been a rich man, but lost everything by gambling, and left a widow and two children in poverty. After ascertaining from Andreas that the story was true, and that she had no friends or relatives in Sipoholon, we asked her to stay here while the eyes had to be attended to; so for two or three days we had a Batta guest, almost without knowing that we had one, except that we had our meals and reading together. She slept in the mission room, rolled up in a mat, quite undisturbed in her corner by the presence of sixty or seventy girls. She joined the women's Bible classes in the day, and lay on her mat if she felt ill, and went morning and evening to Mr. Culemann for medicine. She looked utterly miserable when she first came, but it is a real pleasure to see how comparatively cheerful and strong she looks now.

April 29.—Now our examination has come and gone, and been very successful. Sister Thora, having finished her term in Pea Radja, came on Friday to stay with us, partly to be present at it in the evening, and partly to be ready to go with Sister Kate the day after to-morrow for their holiday work in Sipahuta. It is a great pleasure, as you may imagine, to have Sister Thora here, and a great profit too, which of course must always be the case when one comes in contact with whole-hearted Christians.

May 1.—Yesterday I left Sipoholon, with five Batta men as my companions, to bring me to Pansur-na-pitu for a month's

work. The harvest had begun all through the valley, and it was beautiful to see the people all at work, and the nearly three hours' carrying, all in one day, was not at all too much. On coming near here I found that Tabina and two other women had run out of their village, seeing my bed coming, so I had it stopped for a few minutes to speak to them. One of them said: 'The words you spoke last time you were here have been my strength ever since,' namely, 'If there is much to suffer, there is much to inherit.' All here are most kind and friendly in every way, and do not mind what trouble they take.

Pansur-na-pitu, May 7.—It is so remarkable about Mandailing. From year to year I find myself brought quite suddenly into contact with those who have most to do with it, and who are best able to give information about it, but *only for about five minutes*! We were sitting at supper last night when two men knocked at the door, and came in by invitation and sat on the floor where I could hardly see them, and said they had just come through Mandailing, and reported that some of the people were willing to hear the Gospel, and some were not. I could hardly understand half of what they said, but at any rate such was the substance: then they said 'Good-night,' saying they were returning home next day.

They looked in to say good-bye, accompanied by Bartimeus, who is always on fire for the spread of the Gospel, and who wanted us to have a word of prayer together, which we did, and then he said how much he and one of these men, Manasse, an evangelist, would like to go to Mandailing together for two or three months. This was a startling and most grand suggestion, as it seems to me, and I could only say: 'We must see about it'; and thus the interview concluded.

May 17.—Mr. Purdy gives by no means so encouraging an

account of Mandailing as that of Manasse. Two years ago he sold hundreds of Scriptures, but now it is very difficult to sell any. Each year the work becomes more difficult, so in spite of being again advised to 'wait and see,' I hope to send Bartimeus for two months to Mandailing at the end of June or beginning of July, and to send Manasse with him, if he is still willing to go, as I feel the time has now come for me to take the matter into my own hands, God helping me.

Sipoholon, June 24.—Just a year to-day since Sister Kate's arrival here. Every Sunday morning now Andreas, Esther, Teacher Lukas's wife, Japheth, and Sister Kate, go out to some village to speak to the people and invite them to church. I hope also that to-morrow she will begin some regular village visiting with Andreas and Esther, to look up absentees or read, &c., with the sick, and this is now made easy by Maria, another Christian native girl, being with us, as she can at any time take Esther's place in the house-work. She is very active and willing, and works well, and our family of five get on well together. She and Esther are about the same age, and very happy together, and our little lad Japheth is always very happy with everybody, but as for giving up smoking, he says he could not possibly do so even for a week. He used even to smoke when he went with the others on Sunday morning to the villages, but that, at any rate, I have stopped.

I should like to be able to describe to you, only I cannot, the wonderful peace which rests on this Princess House establishment, where nobody quarrels with anybody else, nor scolds, and where all are willing to do either their own work or each other's. I feel this often, very specially in the morning, when I lie in the front verandah arranging needle-work for more than seventy girls, but at the same time looking out at the beautiful sunshine on the mountains, with Japheth just within sight hacking up weeds from our

court, or fetching sand from the river to lay over the clay ground, with his whole heart in his work, but looking for and appreciating a smile as he comes with a fresh barrowful of sand—such a squeaking wheelbarrow it is, but I like the squeaking, as it shows me where he is: and then I often have a visit from a Batta man or woman.

If I were to go into the garden at the back of the house, which I do sometimes, I should probably find Maria with a garment twisted round her head to keep the sun off, and a very large heavy hoe in her hand, such as all the Battas use, breaking up the earth in the coffee plantation, while Sister Kate is in the kitchen or house showing Esther what to do, or else teaching her little Batta children in the mission room. It is wonderful how well we can find work for both the girls.

One's *sleep does* get a little disturbed, even when the nearly eighty girls have gone to sleep, and are as good as they know how. They do have such bad dreams, and wake up with a sudden cry, and they cough, and are much given to talking in their sleep. Then there is the usual background of rats; not that they have yet begun scrimmaging in my own room, but they seem to be all around and above, and one night Sister Kate struck a light and had a long contest with a rat which would keep running over her bed.

At the first streak of dawn I am up, and often have to knock at the wall to get the scholars to get up, so that we may have prayers, and they may be off before sunrise, but they certainly are most extremely good at getting up as a rule.

July 15.—We have had a pleasant moonlight experience with the night school. On Friday, we sent them all out under the care of Andreas to visit a village twenty minutes off, with strict orders to speak to no one either there or on the road but merely to sing, and do exactly what he told

them, and I believe it answered extremely well. There happened to be only sixty-six that evening, but it certainly was quite enough under the circumstances! They sang as they started 'Dear Saviour, go with us on the way,' and in the village Andreas made them stand or sit (in the open air of course) according to their classes, and all the inhabitants came out of their houses, and listened quietly while they sang, each class in turn, a verse of 'Come to the Saviour,' all joining in the chorus, and he spoke for a short time on the words of the hymn, and prayed, and they returned singing a hymn of praise on the way.

This visit to the village was absolutely unexpected, and must have made a great impression, and it was well worth while to sacrifice the reading, writing, and needlework for the occasion. Before they started I had the usual half-hour's Bible class with them, but as soon as they came in again it was time to call over the names and close.

July 21.—Good quiet Esther is having a difficult time, as they are very urgent for her to marry, which she herself does not at all want to do. We both feel strongly that God Himself has brought us together, and that we must not part.

As for our little servant lad Japheth, I have *completely* lost my heart to him. He has been with us more than four months, and has never given me one moment's anxiety; he seems very fond of work, does all that he is told, and a good deal besides, and all with a broad smile on his round face.

July 28.—Yesterday evening at the night school it was most delightful. I had been telling them previously about the completion of our church, and what a privilege it would be for us all to help, and told them that on Friday night we should be ready to receive contributions.

Accordingly, about forty girls responded to the proposal, and the things brought were rice, ducks' eggs, hens' eggs,

and money, the value of which altogether amounted to 5*s.* 8*d.*

Aug. 13.—These specially welcome gifts keep coming in, till now nearly eleven shillings have been received from seventy-eight girls, besides contributions of rice from Sunday school children, and from various women, for I mentioned it at all the Bible classes, and I like so much better to have small gifts from many than large gifts from a few.

For the last two weeks the work of church alteration has been going on in good earnest, and the pleasant feature in it is the voluntary assistance of some of the elders from the other three districts, thus recognizing the fact that this is the mother church, which indeed it is, as all four districts meet here eight times a year for the church festivals, besides about eight times a year for the Sunday school examination. Those who are most indifferent about the whole thing, are exactly those who live in this district itself. One solitary elder comes to help, but the way the Battas will promise everything, and do nothing, is perfectly disgraceful.

Mr. Culemann called a meeting, and the eight principal chiefs of this district agreed each to contribute a certain amount of planks within two weeks, but the two weeks have gone by, and not one plank has come. The consequence of all this alteration in the church, however, has been the very pleasant one to us of receiving the congregation into our mission room for the Sunday morning service. Perhaps rather less than two hundred people were present, so there was plenty of room for all, and Sister Kate had the pleasure of playing her harmonium, and the greater pleasure of seeing seven people arrive from a village which she and the others had visited that same morning; people who, as a rule, never come to church.

Sept. 2.—About six weeks ago, Bartimeus and the evangelist Manasse went off on a little preaching tour

through Mandailing, and visited a Baptist missionary, whose station is beyond and to the south of it. They have already returned, sooner than I expected, but with, on the whole, a very good report. In several places they have professed themselves willing and glad to receive a missionary, especially at a place called Tanabatu, which is towards the south, and only a day's journey from Mr. Wiebe's station.

Two or three attempts have been made to get our two dear daughters away, Esther and Maria, but so far without success. Esther's brother and mother are very much annoyed by her unwillingness to marry, as they thus lose the money for which she would be sold.

Sept. 8.—But now, to-day, our Maria is gone to Pansur-na-pitu for an indefinite time, and we can only rejoice, as I believe it will really be a spiritual help coming just at this time, when she is beginning to feel her responsibility as a Christian. Her married sister, wife of one of the six candidates for ordination, is ill, and I had a note from her husband this morning, asking for Maria to be sent to help.

Esther came to me the other day to ask if she could help her mother in the manure-carrying, and though Maria is away I said she certainly might, as long as she came home to supper each evening, and that we would manage with Japheth's help. This manure-carrying occupies one or two weeks each year, and just now our night school is reduced to forty or fifty girls, partly in consequence of it. Curiously enough, yesterday Sister Kate, visiting a village, met Esther and her mother going to their field, each carrying a basket of manure on her head, Esther's basket being the larger of the two. I believe this will do more than almost anything else to make our mission work really understood, i. e. that it is not the village *work*, but the village *ways* that are to be avoided. Seeing they are so extra busy now, I take more pains than ever to get the girls up in good time, and

we close rather earlier in the evening. As soon as I see a twinkle of light through the holes in the wall, I knock loudly at the door and call out, 'Get you up,' and then dress as quick as I can in the dark, to be ready for them.

A few days ago I had a small relapse, much throbbing of the spine and an attack of weakness in the night, not from getting up early—*that* does not hurt it—but mostly, I verily believe, from my attempting to read Mrs. Booth's life! The book stands so handy and tempting by the side of the bed, where I lie for two hours in the afternoon, and I only allowed myself one chapter a day, but just taking down and putting up so heavy a book proved rather a business; and certainly I have not as much strength as a child three years old, as I have seen little Frieda carry a big log ,which I should never dream of lifting.

Sept. 29.—There are from five to ten workmen employed on the church, and as their breakfasts and dinners have to be cooked, somehow and somewhere, Mr. Culemann arranged that Guru Lukas and our Guru Andreas should undertake the work alternate fortnights. It then occurred to me that we might as well take our turn too, and now at last our fortnight has come and gone, and a most happy time it has been.

The food is simple enough, rice, greens, and hot capers, and water to drink, and they eat in the mission room, our servant lad Japheth eating with them, while we, with the two girls, eat as usual in our sitting-room. As soon as the meals were over we went into the mission room, so as to have family prayers all together, reading as usual the Batta Bogatzky after breakfast, and a chapter in the New Testament after dinner, each of us reading a verse in turn, except two or three of the men who could not read. They were such very nice little meetings, and always included some singing to suit the subject, and I shall quite miss them. Both Sister Thora and Sister Lisette have their

girls only three times a week, whilst we have them four times, and some of the first class girls (who happen to be also confirmation candidates) *six* times; so very naturally the parents complain, and several have forbidden their daughters to come, which seems to me quite reasonable, as those who come regularly are pretty sure to neglect some home work. The consequence is that, with a great pang, I resolved to give up one evening for the general good of humanity.

However, next morning the thought occurred to me that on these blank days I might visit the four outlying districts alternately, sleeping in the teachers' houses and returning next morning, and using the time there for perhaps three meetings—women, children, and girls.

Sleeping accommodation for me is particularly easy, as I always have to be carried on a bed, and by simply adding blankets and a sheet, which, during the journey, I can lie *on* instead of *under*, the whole thing is complete, and the weight which the four men have to carry is not perceptibly increased, and my small luggage also finds room at the foot of the bed.

I hope to send Bartimeus to Mandailing in January experimentally, and Mr. Wiebe will, God willing, arrange for him to begin a little work somewhere there. In a second letter to Mr. Wiebe I said it seemed wisest, considering the difficulties of the journey, for me not to think of going till it could be permanent, but that I believed this could really take place some time next year (probably not before August). I have now actually written to Mr. Nommensen in Toba, who is the head of the Sumatra Mission, to take my leave, and say that, if he approves, I will pass over this work to Sister Kate, and help in bringing a companion to join her. For myself I hope, though this is still in the vague future, not to stay longer than necessary with the Wiebes, but to live in a Batta teacher's family,

Bartimeus' for instance, in Mandailing; and I hope with a great hope, if God will, to take Esther with me, though it is too soon to speak to her of it.

Oct. 18.—Again there has been an attempt made to take one of our girls away, this time Maria, and again God has helped and kept us in His own wonderful way.

CHAPTER VIII

VILLAGE WORK. LAST MONTHS IN SIPOHOLON

October 20, 1894, *to June* 6, 1895.

'Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.'—2 Cor. ii. 14.

Oct. 20, 1894.—Last Tuesday I actually started off, and spent the night in an outlying station on the mountains—most delightful, in spite of some small discomforts. Esther also came, walking by the side of my bed and pointing out all the villages of which I had heard so much, but had never seen one. The interest of it all you can imagine, perhaps also the beauty, with the morning sun shining on the river; and coming across some people whom I knew, but had never seen in their own regions. Soon we began ascending the mountain, but by a good road, winding round and not over steep, with splendid chasms and cliffs and distant views.

So far the road had been perfectly good, but soon we had to turn to the left over a little bridge, and then through a rice field, which is not nearly so nice as a ploughed field, where was no path at all, and through some water, and even over a little fence. Fancy me and my bed being taken bodily over a fence; and of course the legs of the bed, though very short, caught against it, and of course the little box slung underneath got a bump. Then we went

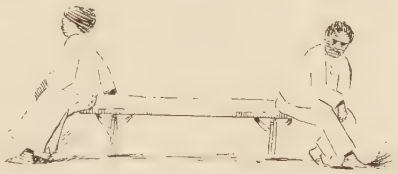
over kind of prairies or moors, where, if there was a path, it was mostly only wide enough for single file; so it was rather a slopy business, and it was pleasant to find oneself finally landed among friendly faces before the church door, having safely reached our destination after a journey of two hours.

Guru Petrus and his wife had arranged very nicely, and, as there were no steps to the door, had put a broad plank for me to walk up, and then the bed was carried in and put in a corner; but, oh! the forlorn wretchedness of that church, proclaiming the utter indifference and selfishness of the people. We had a very good meeting—perhaps between forty and fifty women, besides many other people. In the course of the afternoon we had three or four other small meetings, supposed to be one united one, only the people chose to come at various times; and Esther and I dined in the church, to avoid unnecessary going backwards and forwards. When it got too dark to see to read we prepared to move across to the guru's house, about fifty yards, and the last arrivals, a dozen girls and women, had to follow and squeeze into the little sitting-room, perhaps 10 feet long by 9 feet wide. I was too tired to say much to them, but Esther did her best and when they were dismissed we had supper with Guru Petrus and his wife.

Then we prepared for the night, the whole family retiring to their tiny bedroom, and leaving the sitting-room for Esther and me.

Next morning, between half-past six and seven o'clock, we were all again in the church, and had a very good meeting of women—very impressive. The chief subjects for the two days were— Jerusalem the Golden,' as they have so little idea of the good things which our dear Lord is preparing for us; and the cleansing of the temple, with its spiritual meaning. Some of them seemed much impressed. We started home at 8.30, and reached here by 10.30 a.m.

About half an hour later, quite unexpectedly, a wedding party arrived, with the intention of being married in our Princess House, as the church is still unfinished. It did not take long to get the room ready, so Mr. Culemann soon came and performed the service. He told them to come and sit side by side on the bench, in front of the people, and this is exactly the way they did it; and he had to come and lay hands on them, and dab them down in their right places, but they still kept looking away from each other, as is the fashion with Batta betrothed couples.



The same afternoon was the women's meeting, and the same evening the girls'. It was altogether a full day, but not too full, and I can never thank God enough for His unspeakable goodness in giving me first the thought and then the power to visit these poor and greatly deserted outlying stations.

Oct. 25.—And now, in the same way, He has let me visit another one, Huta Radja, and a most blessed time it was. The journey was two and a half hours over the same beautiful mountains, and the women had already begun to arrive before us in the church—forty-five altogether, besides men, boys, and girls. The beauty of it was to see the work of the Holy Spirit, softening, convicting, comforting. There seemed to be no thought of begging, which is sadly the case often when one attempts anything like an after-meeting, but one or two women had tears in their eyes, over their own sins and those of their people; and I was earnestly entreated to stay two nights instead of one: 'In Silindung there are so many white teachers, but here we are all bad, and there is no one.' This I could not do, but we had

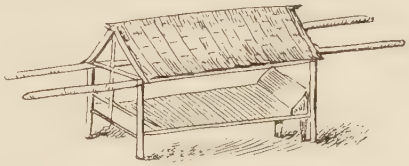
three meetings for women and girls in the twenty-two hours, and I think quite six women came to all three meetings. Maria was my companion on this occasion.

Next morning the women began to come soon after six o'clock, so we had a beautiful large meeting in the church, then breakfast, and then came the lovely journey back in perfect weather, though it had been pouring floods of rain before the expedition, and has been doing the same since.

Dec. 2.—Some time ago Sister Kate, with Andreas and Esther, visited a village more than an hour's walk distant, and found there a poor miserable woman, sitting on the floor with her face to the wall, who had never spoken nor left the house for a year and a half, and if any one attempted to move her she would scream. The beginning of it was that one night she got up quietly, and, for fear people should know she was not still lying asleep, she piled up a heap of sweet potatoes under her sleeping-mat, and went out. They searched the neighbourhood for a day or more, and then found her in a cave, looking dreadfully frightened. They brought her home, but she never spoke or gave any explanation. You may imagine the filthy state the poor thing is in; but, notwithstanding that, they sat by her and talked, and prayed for her recovery, but she never even looked towards them.

From the moment I heard this dreadful story I longed to go and take her all sorts of nice things, in the hope that a sudden shock of love and kindness might bring back her voice. They said the road was very bad, and if I had really understood *how* bad, I should not have had the courage to go, but how often 'ignorance is bliss' in the experience of God's stupid little children! So we started after breakfast, Sister Kate on horseback, Andreas, Esther, and Maria of course on foot, and I, equally of course, on the faithful bed, whose portrait it is high time that I sent you. The kind of matting roof and ridge pole are made

to take off, so it is a most convenient piece of furniture, either by day or night. The two long poles of course can also be drawn out.



The road lay through rivers, and ditches, and ruts, and gullies, and rice fields, and along sheep tracks on a steep mountain side; when there *was* a path it was quite liable to come to a sudden end, and begin again a foot or so lower down or higher up, as the case might be.

After nearly an hour and a quarter of this kind of thing we reached the little village of only six families, and the chief, who had a good house, at once had his verandah swept and a mat laid out, and there in the shade most of the people assembled, and we had a feeble little meeting. All my strength and endurance had expended themselves on the journey there, or were reserving themselves for the journey back, and if it were not that the thing was done to glorify God, and would be accepted as such, I should have felt that it was all folly and waste. The house of the poor woman was close by in full sight, but up a little ladder and through a low door, and I felt quite unequal even to try and visit her, so I sent Sister Kate, and Maria and Esther, with all the nice things, jacket, comb, bag, fruit, picture, and vegetables; and we others remained to sing, so as to prevent them all following out of curiosity, and our song was, 'Jesus loves even me,' which could distinctly be heard over the way.

Now mark God's ways! The very desperation of the case made them feel, 'We *must* get her at least to show herself at the door.' Maria would not go near the woman, but Sister Kate and Esther, with the help of one of my bearers (who from the very deed has stamped himself a Christian), managed to unclasp her hands and get her into the new

jacket and draw her to the door, and then Andreas and Esther actually lifted her down the ladder, and she never screamed nor resisted, for she felt it was all love; and then I went down, and we met halfway, and I took her hand and led her slowly right up the steps on to our verandah; and they set her down by the bed, and we sang a hymn of praise and had a thanksgiving prayer, though the poor thing would neither look up, nor speak, nor move.

Then we proposed the house being cleaned before she went back, which Esther and Maria at once volunteered to do themselves, and no sooner said than done; and then they discovered the abject poverty of the place, not so much as a mat to cover them at night! I believe the hopeless misery of poverty, with no Christian faith, was the cause of the whole history, and that she wanted to commit suicide, but it turned to failure and fright.

We left her on the chief's verandah, to stay in the fresh air till the evening, and came home with thankful hearts, except that I had the sorrow of coming past the entrance of a village where a dear friend lay dying, and I wanted so much to go in and wish her good-bye, but could not.

Dec. 3.—This has been a busy week; with our visit to the village, and the girls' meeting, the meeting for mothers, and the examination: on Saturday morning our prayer-meeting, and on Sunday morning our twenty-two girls confirmed, most of whom have been coming regularly for the last six months, and one solitary lad! Two women, one a great friend of mine, were also baptized at the same Sunday morning service, and all this in our beautiful Princess House mission room.

The church was supposed to be finished by this time, and I hoped to have been at the opening, and would have put off my visit to Pansur-na-pitu for another week, but even that would not be long enough, so I hope to go there quietly to-morrow for the two months' weeding season.

Pansur-na-pitu, Dec. 12.—I have a Bible reading and singing lesson with the six teachers' wives every morning and afternoon. Then every morning I give myself a lesson in the Mandailing dialect, with or without Bartimeus, and every afternoon, when the women are gone, I give Esther and Bartimeus' eldest daughter a lesson in the same.

That dear good man! It is grand to see how he grows and shines, and patiently bears, and is ready for any work that is given him to do. He has himself been taking two daily meetings with the women, and I felt quite awestruck to see how well he did it, and quite shy at taking the work out of his hands. It seems his wife reads over the chapter to him at home beforehand; then, when the women read it round, a verse in turn, he gives an explanation of each verse as it comes, and questions them on it next day.

I found him quite willing to go off to Mandailing whenever I liked to send him. This will probably be the first Saturday in the New Year, Mr. Wiebe, the missionary who lives near there, becoming his general adviser, director, and head. When I said, 'Possibly by next August I shall be able to leave Silindung to go and stay with Mr. and Mrs. Wiebe,' he at once answered, 'Then please God, I will return, say, next June, to be in readiness to accompany you there.' I felt quite touched at the thought of the blind man coming to fetch me, me and Esther—for it is quite understood that she goes too—and I wrote to Barmen about two months ago to tell them all about it. Mr. Wiebe belongs to some other mission, probably a Dutch one, so this will mean completely stepping out of the Barmen Mission.

Jan. 2, 1895.—Two grand weeks of work I have enjoyed here, and felt quite proud of being able to remember what I was learning in the new dialect, six texts, two whole hymns, &c.; but pride comes before a fall, and at the end of the two weeks, nerves and body utterly revolted and rebelled against me to such an extent, that I had to

give up everything, writing, reading, even needlework, all except the usual work with the women; but now I am creeping back again a little into these things.

Jan. 2, 1895.—New Year's Eve was a wild night, and not much sleep was possible—storms of wind and rain, much firing of guns, and constant explosion of those dreadful crackers; even the loud clanging of the church bells did not produce peace, nor suggest the beauty of holiness; and altogether the powers of darkness seemed to have it all their own way; but, just as day was breaking, came clear and low and sweet the sound of a horn or cornet, playing, 'Safe in the arms of Jesus,' all the three verses. The storm had ceased by that time, and also the firing, and each note could be heard, clear and soft; it was one of the teachers, who was playing it in his own house, but it seemed to come down straight from heaven, and all for me, as the others did not hear it, and it brought the triumphant message, ever fresh and true, 'A little child shall lead them.'

Bartimeus' time for leaving us is drawing very near, the day after to-morrow. He goes, God willing, straight through Mandailing to Mr. and Mrs. Wiebe's station, and will probably stay a month or two there, getting acquainted with their work before beginning alone in Mandailing itself. His faith and courage and joy are marvellous. This week we meet daily in prayer for himself and the family, who at present remain behind; and each time I give him some grand word to think of, such as Isa. xlii. 16, and, for to-morrow, Acts iv. 13. This morning his own prayer was so extremely short that I venture to write it down in full, for the careful consideration of English friends. It was this: 'Hallelujah! Amen!' It is also beautiful to hear how his dear wife, Martha, is trusting and rejoicing, only looking out for hymns of *praise* in their little watch-night service. How is Bartimeus to be replaced here? Well, we do not know, but we must always be willing to give up our best

workers to do the most difficult work, whether that happens to be abroad or at home.

Jan. 6.—Esther and I have been here now a month, so half our visit is over. It is delightful having her here, my first daughter; she is gradually learning a little of the Mandailing dialect, and she has got the souls of the people everywhere laid on her heart. She spoke so earnestly to a young girl this morning, saying, 'I was just like you formerly'; and this seemed to take hold of the girl, and the tears came into her eyes.

Bartimeus actually started on the fourth of this month for Mandailing, and, I may almost say, started *alone*, for his guide (his wife's brother) can only go part of the way, and at one of the missionary stations he hopes to find some one, but of course a stranger, willing to be his guide. He is certainly a grand specimen of a Christian hero, going, alone and blind, to begin a work among unfriendly people, and in a bad, hot climate. His wife also holds up grandly, and the four daughters seem quite happy.

Jan. 13.—His brother-in-law returned on Monday evening last, bringing a very welcome letter and a most interesting account of God's kindness to Bartimeus. At the two stations which they had reached the missionaries lent him their own horses to help him on the way, and the second one, Mr. S., has found a first-rate guide; and they hoped to reach Mr. Wiebe's place yesterday, Saturday, sleeping three nights in Mandailing on the way.

Jan. 18.—It strikes me more and more, as years go on, that you in England are getting a very one-sided impression of me and my life. This is because it is so much more pleasant to write of God's loving-kindness, and the *perfect* path along which He leads His children, than to go into a detailed description of my own unworthiness, and faults, and countless failures. Looking back on past years, I can now so plainly see how I have destroyed myself, like Israel

of old: 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help. I will be thy King' (Hos. xiii. 9, 10). Over and over again I have made shipwreck by steering my own vessel, instead of giving up all to the Great Captain; but out of the broken fragments He is for ever making a new vessel, and filling the sail with a fresh breath of love. Most certainly it was the King who guided me to Pansur-na-pitu, perhaps to find Bartimeus; and as certainly He guided me to Sipoholon, perhaps to find Esther; and I *believe* He means to guide us three to Mandailing, but how, and when, I am sure I do not know. This continual consciousness of failure, and of the reason of the failure, has perhaps been brought to a head by my having just read a wonderful German book, *Dorothea Trüdel*, which shows what a single woman with a weak spine can do, or, rather, how she can be used, when she *really* comes to an end of herself. Well, may the Lord in His great goodness enable each of us to die daily, and evermore experience what it means, 'Not I, but Christ!'

Jan. 23.—Wonderful that God has spared me, so contrary to all expectation, to see this, my fifty-second birthday; and He has never ceased to love and bless me. He has just been giving me one of the desires of my heart, and enabled me to visit Si Massom, what I call the Walworth of Pansur-na-pitu. I had prayed very earnestly to be prevented from going, unless the visit should be of some lasting benefit. To my extreme surprise, six men, of their own free will, came over and slept here last Sunday night, with the express determination of carrying me to Si Massom on Monday, and these men were from five or six different villages belonging to opposite parties.

Esther, it need not be said, was my companion, and, at Mr. Johannsen's suggestion, also two of the teachers' wives, each carrying a small child, for the six miles' expedition. We started just after breakfast. Every inch of the way the scenery was magnificent, and the weather perfect; and

in two hours, for we rested a little by the way, we saw the dear little church, and heard the bell, and a little party were already assembled to greet us. Everything took place in the church, the meetings, the eating, and the sleeping, as the teacher's house was down a steep, crooked path. We had four meetings that day, and one at 6.30 next morning; so it was like a little mission week condensed, with one line of thought carried through the whole, 'Freedom from bondage.' The attendance was small, but most satisfactory, the most perfect stillness and attention prevailing from beginning to end; always more men than women, and a fair supply of boys and girls besides. In the evening, when only two women came (a steep road and a dark, windy night), there must have been about twenty men, as far as I could make out in the dimness of a small oil lamp in a corner, and a rushlight somewhere on the ground—at any rate, ten different men prayed, and one could hear the points of the address taken up in their prayers.

After they had dispersed, we four prepared ourselves for the night, not taking off anything, but putting *on* almost everything that came to hand. The extreme cold of that penetrating wind you would perhaps hardly credit; but the church stands quite alone on the tip-top of a hill, among the mountains, and the walls are only single planks, with plenty of cracks. The other three, with the two mites, were together at the side of the church, and kept the lantern burning all night, but the poor things ached with cold, though rolled in plenty of mats. I, on my side, was warm and comfortable with my bed and blankets; but my face, which alone was exposed, was so cold with the penetrating wind that I had to cover it up also.

I should say this was the best mission expedition that I have yet made, but I will only describe the second meeting, which was more like the old Princess House than

anything I have yet experienced in Sumatra. I told my three, beforehand, that I should perhaps call upon them each to give a testimony as to the power of Christ to set them free from this or that idol, or difficulty, or sin; but I little thought how wonderfully well they would do what to them was quite a new thing. The first stood up, when called upon, and said: 'At my marriage, according to Batta custom, my father gave me a valuable robe, which I esteemed so highly that I never would wear it, and it became to me like an idol; but, now my heart is changed, such things have become to me as mere shadows, and I have got rid of that robe' (she did not explain what she did with it), 'and now I am free.'

Then we sang a verse which begins, 'We long to be perfectly free,' and the second one stood up, and said: 'I used to have a most fearful temper; for a day and night together I would eat nothing, but only cry, if my will was crossed, or if I was vexed at anything; but now I am converted, my father and mother and sister are all dead, but I did not cry; they are now happy, and I am happy; Jesus is father and mother to me, and that is enough.'

We sang our refrain again, which, indeed, ran through the whole meeting, and then it was Esther's turn. Her voice was not quite steady, but perhaps on that account all the more powerful. She said: 'My family used to be very rich, but in my father's time we became quite poor, and I was miserable, and felt despised, and could find no comfort, for I was still a heathen. Some Christian companions took me to a church, but, as they were rich, I accompanied them very unwillingly. However, having once been and seen how good it was, I could never stay away again. I longed to be baptized, *and it came to pass*; I longed to go to the Lord's Table, *and it came to pass*. My brother is still an unbeliever, but I am praying for him, and perhaps even now he is converted. I have found peace, and if any of you are

still in misery, hear what Jesus says in Matthew xi, "Come unto Me," &c.' They all said much more than I have written, and each made earnest appeals to the men and women present, and all was listened to in most profound stillness. So altogether this visit was very clearly God's will for us.

You will say, 'But you must be much better, to be able to go about like this!' Well, I suppose I am, and I praise God for it with all my heart, but still I do have curious sensations sometimes, which feel more like warnings than encouragements at the time. However, going to Si Massom seems to have been a tonic.

Sipoholon, Feb. 10.—Coming back here was made a real pleasure by the way it was accomplished. The Si Massom men made a special request to carry me back when the time came, and Sister Kate and I subsided into our usual work as if we had never left it.

Feb. 11.—Esther's brother has found some one whom he wants to marry, and he and her uncle have spoken long and bitterly to Esther, saying that she must marry, that the brother's bride may be bought with the price paid for *her*. As to accepting money from me, which would make the whole thing straight in a minute, no indeed! They are not going to degrade themselves in that way! They will not even consent to borrow it from me. Then people would say that I had bought Esther, and made her into a slave! So altogether it is getting rather complicated. It is possible that another difficulty lies behind, namely, Esther's degradation(?) in remaining single. I have some idea that her intention is only to remain single during my life, and I am getting older and older, so it may not be for long.

Feb. 23.—Esther's brother is now really and truly married, so I hope *that* matter will be allowed to rest in peace.

The work in Mandailing seems to be really beginning. Mr. Wiebe has written to me twice, and Bartimeus again

lately. He is gone with his guide, and one of Mr. Wiebe's teachers, to spend a month in a Mandailing village, called Maga, where the chief was most friendly, and the first three nights they spent in his house, while looking out for one to hire. The people in the village, however, are, unlike their chief, decidedly unfriendly, and consider it a great offence for Christians to come and bathe in their water. Bartimeus has not yet got the official permission from Government to live and work among them; but Mr. Wiebe does not anticipate any difficulty about it, and he writes full of hope and joy. It certainly is most wonderful how, step by step, God is opening the way.

March 2.—Last Tuesday we had a grand time. I had long wished to go to Huta Zinggi, a still quite heathen village. It was rather an experiment to go for a night where there was no church, and no teacher's house as a refuge, only Batta houses, liable to be filled with smoke, smells, and insects, or else a kind of barn with no walls. However, I decided to take Andreas (and some nails), besides Esther; and the good chief, Radja Augustin, not only promised to let them know, and to see about some respectable shelter for the night, but also said he would come with us; so we started in faith about 7 a.m., and were nearly four hours and a half in getting there. The last part of the way must be something like the American prairies, I should think, undulating tracts up in the mountains, no trees, no houses, no streams, only short coarse grass, stunted ferns, and a few low flowering bushes; the beauty consisting of the lights and shades on the distant hills, and the lovely mountain air. Indeed, even after we arrived, houses and people were conspicuously absent, as the chief's own village consisted of only seven families in four houses, and the other villages were very much hidden away.

On alighting, I was rather aghast to find that the barn was our destination, or rather to find that one had to climb

into it by a ladder. However, it was no use making an ugly face, one could only bargain that if the getting up was really accomplished there should be no getting down again till next morning. Happily, there were two ladders side by side, so with Andreas on the other ladder, and Radja Augustin at the top, and Esther close behind, and a man on the other side, it was slowly but safely accomplished; and then the bed was hauled up. It was such a nice barn; they had emptied and swept it, and laid down clean new mats; and the first meeting began directly, very nice, but very small; our largest meeting consisted of twenty women and not so many men; but then we had so many meetings, and different people came each time. We had another after dinner, and another at four o'clock, and another by the flicker of a small oil lamp; and then we said 'Good-night,' and told them the next meeting must be in the morning. This seemed, however, to make no impression, as after supper they appeared again, so we had our fifth meeting that day. The men, with the help of nails and mats, partitioned off a little room for Esther and me; and Andreas, Radja Augustin, and another man slept on the other side of our hanging mat. The morning meeting, our largest one, began soon after six o'clock; and by seven o'clock we got off, taking our cooked rice with us to eat by the way, having had a delightful twenty hours' mission. The chief's mother, a quiet intelligent woman, was present at all the six meetings, and seemed really to take in what was said.

March 30.—The Mandailing affair is creeping blessedly forward, step by step; the Dutch Government have given permission to Bartimeus to go on evangelizing there, and I have written to Mr. Wiebe to say I have really stepped out of the Barmen Mission, and am quite willing to work in concert with and under the protection of their Baptist Mission.

April 3.—I must tell you of another expedition, one we made, because it does so show forth God's loving-kindness

and gentleness, 'Thy gentleness hath made me great' (Ps. xviii. 35). There seemed an opening to go to Bahalbatu, but it not only lay along a road of fearful deep stiff mud, but also across a river with peculiarly troublesome banks; we had had a week of extra full work here, and for the hundredth time I thought I had come to an end of my powers; and so, after arranging to go, I was penetrated with a sense of my own folly, and at the Saturday prayer-meeting we had united prayer about it.

Nothing, however, stopped it, so off we went: Esther and I with the four bearers; and lo! the mud had almost entirely disappeared, the result of two fine days. It is extraordinary how a day or two can entirely alter the whole aspect of the roads, and crossing the river hardly took us more than two minutes; we crossed with no difficulty, and it turned out that some one from Bahalbatu had been sent to mend the bank. It was a particularly hearty and apparently successful twenty hours' mission; and I met there, quite unexpectedly, my good old friend Pandita Ernst, whose district now lies not far from there. The evening meeting in the teacher's house was packed; he said eighty must have been there, the verandah being also full, and some having to go away. Esther and the teacher's wife were the means of sending or bringing fifty, as they went to the village to collect them.

Since our visit to that poor dumb woman she has actually begun to speak a little occasionally; but her limbs have become stiff and hard, and, I suppose, without a miracle she *could not* now stand up. The road is such that I could not be taken again to her village, but from time to time we have sent her things, as joyful surprises are the only human medicine that I know of in such a case. Lately her husband has come home, which is an immense step, as no one in the whole village could be trusted to supply her and her two sons regularly with rice, and there seemed a serious

danger of her being allowed to die of starvation and neglect; and I was nearly in despair. Now he can meet Andreas every Thursday at the weekly market and carry off a bag of rice; and we have also found him a little work to do. He had gone away from home just because he was too miserable to stay there, and would not cultivate his rice field, as there was no one to weed it, this being woman's work.

Oh, these Battas! they are so funny, and they do get the better of me sometimes. There is a widow who always insists upon coming to this church instead of her own, because I once gave her a garment, but she has a little girl named Dangol (Misery) to whom I gave none, so little Misery always accompanies her without a stitch of clothing on. She is about two years old, a most fascinating, artless little thing, who always comes straight up to me, putting her hand in mine, and looking in my face with the most trustful, smiling confidence, quite at variance with her name, and in spite of my repeated assurances that I had no jackets to give away. At last I could bear it no longer, and remembered a certain large coloured cotton handkerchief, used to wrap up a parcel of patterns sent me from England. It required no making, and was amply large enough to cover her, Batta fashion, from armpits to feet, so I allowed myself the pleasure of tucking it round her, like the accompanying sketch, and she *did* look so pretty. The next Sunday she ran up to me as usual, accompanied by her new garment, but, alas! rolled up into a tight ball and held fast in her hand; but no one seemed to think this was at all funny or unsatisfactory.

April 13.—Little Misery continues her fascinations. One Sunday she appeared with a small coin for the collec-

tion carefully folded in the corner of her new garment, the coin being worth one-quarter of a farthing; but the next time the aspect of affairs had changed, the garment was rolled up to represent a baby, and fastened to her back in orthodox Batta fashion, with another garment borrowed from her mother! Another day she lent it to her brother, that it might hang over his shoulder when he brought us some wood that we had ordered, so that old coloured handkerchief, which was meant only for a wrapper, is making itself quite conspicuous.

April 20.—We had a very full and happy Good Friday; a very full church in the morning, as all four districts came; a very large number again in the afternoon, a preparation service for the Communion next day. Thirty of our girls, present or former scholars, were present: and I wanted them all to come to the night school that same evening for some more special preparation; but, as some were from distant villages, and could not have gone home between, we asked them all to have an early supper with us, before the regular school opened. This was a not-to-be-neglected opportunity of speaking to them individually, and in perhaps an hour and a half I managed to speak alone to twenty-seven of them, a most necessary and profitable but *most* exhausting work. It often began like this, 'If there is anything to hinder your coming to the Communion tell me, that I may help you.'

'I shall not be able to come.'

'Why?'

'There is hatred in my heart towards so-and-so; we have quarrelled.'

Perhaps the so-and-so was present, and then she was called up, and, if possible, they were got to make it up and shake hands. It ended in twenty-nine out of thirty-one

girls really coming with us to the Lord's Table on Easter Monday, many for the first time: a most happy service.

April 28.—Now I am satisfied. I have seen a leper saint, a Batta, named Emmanuel. Years ago I read a little German tract about him, and ever since then I wanted to see him, but it was only lately that I found he lived not very far from here. They told me it was four hours off, and it was rather difficult for me to know the Lord's will about going, so I thought the right thing would be to make every arrangement to go, to show my willingness and trust, and then to believe in God's tender compassion to stop the journey if it was really too much. So I wrote to Sister Charlotte, the mission sister at Pansur-na-pitu, who wanted to go with me on one of these expeditions, that she might sleep here on the Monday night, and I wrote to Guru Emmanuel to prepare his mind; and accordingly we started about half-past six next morning. After two or three hours of shaking about, for the men did not keep step, and feeling, besides that, particularly sick and bad, I began to hope for something to happen to send us back; but instead of that we kept going on, and the four hours stretched to more than five before the goal was reached. Now I'll give you one specimen of the kind of road it sometimes was. A footpath, meant for one person, raised two or three feet above a rice field or piece of water, but so narrow that the men's outer feet had to scrape along the sloping sides in an anyhow kind of way; then this path, imperfect as it was, was liable to come suddenly to an end, and begin again a foot or two lower down, or higher up, with much slippery mud, and then, with a heave and a twist, we managed to struggle on to a comparatively decent road again.

On arriving, we made straight for the little church, and in a few minutes it was nearly filled for the first meeting, and the troubles of the way were wellnigh forgotten, only a new one began.

'But where is Guru Emmanuel?' I said.

'Oh, he is in his house, not well enough to come.'

'Well, but I really *must* see him just once; I have for years longed to meet him.'

And accordingly, when the meeting had dispersed, a large and very dirty man, with a thick heavy face, and wearing mud-covered shoes, slowly walked in and sat down, curled up on a large home-made chair; and this was the saint! I was not at all disappointed, and quite understood that it was thoughtful kindness which made him keep away from us; the shoes were of course to prevent infection, which, they say, is specially carried through footprints, and sitting curled up on a chair was for the same reason; and some of the dirt was accounted for by the coal-tar kind of stuff which he rubbed on his body for a remedy, or rather palliative, for his is the incurable leprosy, and some of the fingers on his right hand were already gone. He said:

'When I received your letter I could not understand why you wanted to come here, and when you sent for me I could not understand why you wished to see me, but now I know—you wanted that we should come together on earth that we might know each other in heaven. I am thankful that a prophetess has come among us, for, though some of our men are Christians, the women seem to understand nothing. And you too, O Esther, are a child of God, or you would not have come to visit me in my house; you would rather have spit and turned away from me, *but you too will have to suffer.*'

'Yes,' I said, 'she is soon going to suffer—to leave all her dear ones to go with me and Bartimeus to Mandailing.' Of course he was an old friend of Bartimeus, as I think all good people in Sumatra are.

By this time a few people had gathered together again in the church, so I spoke to them on Acts iv. 13, of the unlearned and ignorant men of whom it was witnessed

that they had been with Jesus; and then I asked him to speak.

'Yes,' he said, 'that is it; we must be *with Jesus*, and all will be well. I have to work for my living, and God enables me to work. The sun beats down upon me, but I do not mind it, because I am with Jesus; and all my limbs ache, but I do not feel it, because I am with Jesus; and the rain pours down, but I do not heed it, because I am with Jesus. When I sit at home I am so weak and ill that I can hardly speak above a whisper, but, as soon as I get into this church, I know the message must be made to reach the people, and I am enabled to speak loud, because I am with Jesus. If no one helps to support me, I don't let it trouble me; but oh, I do get troubled when you turn away from Jesus, and will not give up your sins!' A good deal more he said, and no one cared to speak after him; one could only just wipe away one's own tears.

That was our only meeting with him. He did not come in the evening, when the church was crowded, nor the next morning, when it was again nearly full; but, on leaving, they carried me to the side of his house, and, without seeing each other again, we said 'Good-bye,' and he sent his greeting to Bartimeus and his wife and Mr. Johannsen. Sister Charlotte went twice to visit him in his house, but we slept and ate in the church.

Guru Emmanuel was first at Bahalbatu, but they drove him out of the district because of his leprosy, and some people have tried to turn him out of Gouting, but the good chief will not allow it, and built him that nice little church where he preaches every Sunday, but he has not a scrap of salary. Although a leper, he goes in and out among the people, and has a wife and three children.

So we turned away and came back the five hours' tramp; bad enough for Sister Charlotte on horseback; indeed, her horse once completely stuck in the mud, and I had to be

hastily dabbed down, for my men to go to her rescue, and prevent the horse backing over the precipice. On arriving here I felt more fresh and rested than the day before on the road there; but now, after four days, I am beginning to ache all over my body.

And now I feel that my work of visiting the outlying districts is over. I have visited them all once, and one twice, but after the harvest holidays Sister Kate can take up that work with Andreas; and perhaps I shall pay little farewell visits to the other stations in Silindung, where the missionaries live, and say good-bye to my white brothers and sisters before leaving for Mandailing; I may be leaving at the beginning of August.

Esther and I are very diligent with our Mandailing dialect, studying it for about an hour every afternoon, when nothing special prevents. To-morrow we hope to have our night school examination; on Tuesday, D.V., Esther goes to visit some of her relatives, while I go to Pansur-na-pitu.

"*Pansur-na-pitu, May* 13.—Now we are all dispersed during the harvest holidays; here everything goes on in its usual regular busy fashion. My dear Tabina is growing spiritually, and seems now to be really leaning less upon me than on her Lord. Her husband is not yet converted, but he is tending in that direction.

Almost every afternoon I have a half-hour's study of the Mandailing dialect with Bartimeus' two eldest daughters, perhaps eleven and seven years old; and then they go and repeat what they have learnt to their mother, and I am having her also once a week, a very quiet woman, but so retiring that I have rather to *make* her come.

May 21.—On Saturday afternoon, about five o'clock, who should appear but our dear Bartimeus, about a fortnight before I expected him, and it seemed indeed the right time on all accounts. Two or three of his children have been

ill, the baby long and seriously (though he knew nothing of this), and their lessons here had to be discontinued; and though his good wife Martha came to our prayer-meeting that same morning, it struck me for the first time that she was beginning to give way, and looked, poor thing, as if her cup were almost too full.

We did not speak much with Bartimeus on Saturday or Sunday, feeling he ought to rest and be with his family, but Monday morning he and Esther were both at our meeting in the Princess House, and I conducted it as usual; but asked him, when we met again at three o'clock, to tell us something about his travels. They are all Mohammedans there. He came to a river where the bridge was broken down and the water very deep, but comforted himself by thinking that God had provided an ark for Noah on the top of the flood; and presently the chief of that place came up and said, 'Why did you not send your servant to let me know beforehand, that I might have prepared a crossing for you?' He then set six men to work, and finally made his people carry Bartimeus and his servant (guide) and his luggage across, they having to cross the river, or recross it, four times before it was all accomplished. Then Bartimeus prayed, and thanked God for His goodness in providing, not, as to Noah, an ark of wood, but one composed of human beings! The men heard this wayside thanksgiving, and asked if that was the religion of the Christians. 'Yes,' said Bartimeus, 'when God hears our prayers and delivers us out of difficulties we thank and praise Him.'

At another house a teacher, or hadji, perhaps, received him and presented him with bread and wine. He remembered Melchizedek, and felt constrained to accept it, but, after accepting the hospitality, said he would prefer to pay; but the teacher said, 'No, give the money rather to the poor.'

The month of March is the fasting month of the Moham-

medans, and during this time Bartimeus made himself ill with overwork, as it was so rich an opportunity for preaching the Gospel. He showed them what Scriptural fasting really meant—denying the lusts of the flesh, and drawing near to God; but merely to abstain from food and continue in sin was of no avail. The people answered. 'All we know about fasting is the bodily inconvenience, but our teachers tell us to fast, and so we fast, but they never explained to us the meaning of it.'

At Maga, which, we hope, will some day be the head quarters of our work, the chief, an old man, was most friendly, and related how Mohammedanism first entered Sumatra. 'We wanted Christian missionaries, and asked for them, but they did not come; and then with the Government came also the Mohammedans, and they conquered us by violence; and we are ashamed to return to our old heathenism; but you, alone and blind, have come to us in love; and you must stay with me three or four days, till you find a house to suit you. Three times a week I have a conference of chieftains in my verandah, and you can use that opportunity for preaching to them, instead of wearying yourself in visiting their villages.'

All this shows more plainly than ever that God means us to go to Mandailing, so He will be sure to make the details plain, and all I have to do is to go straight to the Wiebes', so as to be as near as possible, and wait there for His time and way to be made plain.

May 29.—A letter has actually come to say that our Princess House member, Miss Emily Dutton, has taken Sister Kate's request as the Lord's leading, and hopes to start as soon as He opens the way; but this cannot be just directly, as she would probably go to Barmen for a short time first. I am so thankful and delighted on Sister Kate's account, that really, in all probability, she will have this English friend as a companion. My own affairs, meantime, are beginning

to gallop; and I have felt constrained, and very willingly constrained, to arrange to leave Sipoholon on Monday, June 24, if all goes well, and to stay only one night here; so as to start, in all quietness, on the twenty-fifth with Bartimeus and others, perhaps more than twenty people in all, but I the only white one.

The enclosed plan [1] will show you the route, a little cross marking the mission stations; and I do not think we shall travel more than three or four hours in one day. I have only marked the principal places; in fact, we cannot yet tell how many halts in between we may have to make.

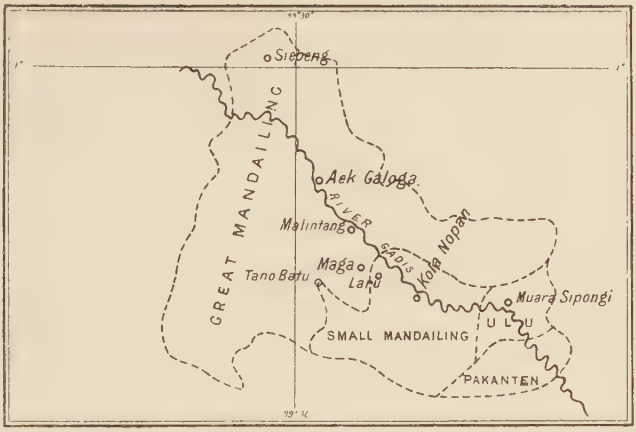
It will be specially interesting going through Maga, which will, perhaps, in God's good time, be our future home. A very powerful and very friendly chief lives there, named Soutan. He is the old man who related how Mohammedanism first entered Sumatra, and he kept Bartimeus and his guide for some days as his guests till a suitable house could be found. This house belonged to his brother, a *hadji*, which means a great and holy man who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca, and the rent agreed on was two rupees a month. At the end of the month, when Bartimeus came to pay, the hadji said, 'No, that was no real bargain, my brother would never let me receive money from you; you are quite welcome to use the house.' And this from a hadji, who are supposed to be full of bigotry and opposition! It was, however, really from 'Him who openeth and no man shutteth.' Strange that this place, Maga, is the very scene of the great earthquake, three years ago. The volcano mountain belongs to Soutan, and the people who were killed by it, between one and two hundred, were all his own subjects.

Besides Mr. and Mrs. Wiebe in Klein (Little) Mandailing, there is a mission station in Pakanten under Mr. and Mrs. Nikkel; and Bartimeus has brought a lad back with

[1] See page 209.

him from Pakanten, Herman by name, who speaks the Batta Mandailing, and has been helping him in his preaching work. He is making himself quite at home here, helping Bartimeus and his family in their harvesting and other work, and no doubt he will be a great help in the removing time and on the journey; also with the dialect.

Sipoholon, June 6.—Just arrived here, having paid two *delightful* visits of one night each to Mr. and Mrs. Kessel at Simarangkir, and Mr. Mohri and his daughter at Huta Barat; so very kind and friendly and sympathizing, and so thoroughly understanding why I am going to Mandailing; and that these five and a half years were only a waiting time. It was really beautiful, the Johannsens, as usual, filled with kindness and sympathy, also fully understanding all about it.



GREAT AND LITTLE MANDAILING.

CHAPTER IX

ON THE WAY TO MANDAILING

June 16 to August 2, 1895.

'And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them.'—JOHN x. 4.

'Arise, let *us* go hence.'—JOHN xiv. 31.

Sipoholon, Silindung, June 16, 1895.—'Thine age shall be clearer than the noonday.' Yes, that is true enough, but the whole passage is beautiful (Job xi. 13-19), and it always seems 'better further on.' What is specially beautiful now is watching Esther in this our last week in Sipoholon. Already, for many months past, everybody has been talking about her, as one who has given up all thought of marriage so as to live with me, and be free for God's work; no doubt the first Batta girl that has dared to take such a step. But now the wonder is greatly increased to find she means to forsake this place and all who are dear to

her, to go with me to the unknown Mandailing. The missionaries in Toba say the thing is unheard of, and, of course, from her own relatives it is nothing but lamentations and discouragements.

Sipirok, July 1.—On Monday, June 24, at 8 a.m., we had a quiet, cheerful parting, and a mass of people came with me an hour's distance on the way, singing all the time, Mr. Culemann on horseback. Then we had a little prayer by the roadside, and a Hallelujah chorus, and they went back, except about twelve girls, who went all the way to Pansur-na-pitu.

At the great bridge I saw Sister Thora waiting with a whole mass of her girls, who accompanied us, singing, to Simarangkir. A little further we met six teachers, now ordained, with their families, who on that very day were leaving to visit their various homes. That night, at Pansur-na-pitu, I had such an attack of weakness and faintness, that I did not believe I should have strength to go out of the house on my own feet; but, as usual, with the next day came the needed strength, and when once out of the house and the link really broken, I felt that the worst was now over, and was at rest, and have had unbroken peace and satisfaction from that moment; no more attacks or throbbings. Mr. Johannsen, on foot, and many others went with us half an hour on the way, and had a parting prayer before returning.

That night we slept at Onankasang, where the teacher had prepared everything, and found a warehouse for our party of twenty-six people, where we all ate together, and had a meeting for the people of the place. Esther also spoke, and Martha prayed. Next day we came to Pangaloan. Next day, after two hours' march, we came to a village where some old friends from Pansur-na-pitu lived. After a meeting in the village street (to which some Mohammedans

GREAT MANDAILING.

also came), we went on to the deep river, perhaps the worst part of our whole journey. Two or three weeks ago it was so deep that a horse got beyond his depth and had to swim, but since then God has been giving dry weather, so it was not so deep. There was a rickety, swingy bamboo bridge for those who could go on foot, but that did not avail for me, so we went through the deep waters, eight men holding up my bed, and we found it true that God was with us. All went smoothly, only the legs of the bed got wet, and we were exactly four minutes struggling with the river. We had a prayer of thanksgiving on the other side, and reached Simangumban the same day.

Next morning we were off again, and Mr. Stroetker wanted us to go right through to Sipirok, as the halfway place was inhabited only by fanatical Mohammedans. But it was too far for the children to walk, and it turned out splendidly, for the people were most courteous, set apart a small house for Bartimeus and his family and Esther, and as my bed could not get in at the door, they contrived a little matting bedroom in a rice barn, which has a roof and floor, but no walls, and all the coolies slept in the barn too, as a protection. We had plenty of preaching and singing, and Bartimeus explained where lay the difference between our two religions, all of which was taken in very good part.

Next morning, Saturday, we arrived here, for three nights' rest, only the people keep coming and coming, as they all want to see the 'aged one' who is going to Mandailing! I am really now the most aged sister, either married or unmarried, in Sumatra, and Mr. Hanstein made me go to the church on Saturday evening and speak to the girls who come there for instruction.

Si-epeng, Mandailing, July 5.—Here by God's grace we arrived at noon to-day, our journey so far being like a

miracle of love all along. We left Sipirok on the 2nd, Mr. Hanstein and a flock of girls going some way with us; then they all joined hands round the bed, and we parted, with singing and prayer. Just before, a hurricane of wind and rain came on, and a man had to walk on each side of me to hold on the roof of the bed, as string was quite useless. Mr. Hanstein still came on, as we were to have a meeting on the roadside with the eight lepers, who live about a mile off the road. By that time the rain had ceased, and we had a most beautiful and touching time, singing, prayer, and short addresses. Esther's words especially must have touched their hearts. Then they went their way, and Mr. Hanstein laid his hand on my head and blessed me in the name of the Lord, and did the same to Bartimeus and Esther; and this was our parting with the Barmen Mission, and a very lovely parting too.

That night we spent in a teacher's house, and the next night at Sidempuan, where I was the guest of some Dutch missionaries, sent out by a Java committee. The night after that we spent in a little Government coffee warehouse, we seven females inside, the men just outside; then we made rather a long stretch, so as to get into Mandailing the same day, and now it is Saturday, the 6th. Here our work begins. We were seven hours on the road, including some long rests, the last being on the little bridge which formed the boundary of the land, and there we held a consecration meeting, before parting from the old land to enter the new; the seventeen coolies formed themselves into one group, and we, the nine Mandailing people, into another, a never to be forgotten time. About a quarter of an hour later we reached Si-epeng, where the chief received us into his house with the greatest courtesy, while a separate house was being prepared for our reception.

By 3 p.m. (we had eaten nothing since 7.30 a.m.) the fire was lighted in our new house, and Bartimeus asked

for the rice, but none was forthcoming. Wherever the coolies inquired, no one would sell. The chief himself said he had none (!), and though he went personally to inquire of others, they also gave the same answer. So Bartimeus said, 'Let us pray,' and he prayed to the Lord who had provided for the 5,000. A little later I said, 'Let us sing,' and we sang the beginning of Ps. ciii. which is turned into Batta verse; and while we were singing the first line, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul,' one of the coolies came in with more than enough rice for our party of twenty-six; and from that moment they were most ready to sell, at a fair price, all we wanted.

We have countless opportunities here of explaining our message to the various groups of people, chiefly men, who come to look at us, and sit down in our large reception room, which is also Esther's and my bedroom. The other side of a partition, the Bartimeuses sleep and cook. The coolies are lodged elsewhere, but all assemble here for morning and evening prayer. God's goodness in giving us these coolies, who are also personal friends, is beyond words to express. From Sipirok southwards the people are extremely proud, and think that carrying human beings is the work of slaves. The coolies, as a race, are also extremely difficult to deal with, and quite capable of leaving one absolutely in the lurch.

It is remarkable how perfectly contented and happy and at rest I feel with my beloved Batta family; I seem to have had a special healing from the moment I left Silindung—no headache, no nerves, no throbbing spine; and when I am called home I should like just *these* to be with me.

Muara Sipongi, July 16.—One is no sooner in Mandailing than one feels oneself in the midst of hidden enemies and false friends; they have a remarkable way of letting us come to their villages, and yet keeping quite aloof from us.

From Si-epeng we came on Monday, the 8th, to Malintang, where there was a good house belonging to a friend of Bartimeus. It consisted mostly of one large room, in which we all slept, the coolies at one end, and we at the other; and I had a talk with two or three women. Next day, the 9th, we came through Penjabugan, where the Dutch controlleur lived; so, as in duty bound, we went to pay him our respects, singing a Batta hymn before his house. He came out and was very friendly, and asked me to come in and have coffee, but I would not desert my party. He says as soon as Bartimeus' permission comes he will send it; he wished us all prosperity, but said, in his opinion, a mission work would not succeed, as Mohammedanism had taken fast hold of the people. I heard afterwards that he was a Roman Catholic.

Bartimeus had hurt his foot a day or two before, and by this time it was so bad that, an hour or two later, we arranged to stay for the night at a little roadside eating-place, kept by a man who made friends with Bartimeus on his former tour, he and his wife and five children, poor, simple, friendly people, who really seemed to wish to learn. I felt specially at home there, and we said we should much like to return and spend a week or two with them.

In the evening several men came to see us, and Bartimeus preached to them, but they made themselves rather disagreeable, and asked us to treat them all to fowl, which we declined to do. Then they went away, and we settled down for the night, the Bartimeuses in one hut, most of the coolies in another, Esther and I and six coolies (as a protection) in the third. When all were asleep, about thirty men, so I was told, surrounded our huts and asked where the lady slept; then they waked Bartimeus and said they must speak to me, if only for a moment. He said this was impossible at such an hour, and with difficulty persuaded them to go away, telling them to call again and speak to me in the

morning. Then at 11 p.m. he woke us all, and said we must go off. I thought it a very unseemly hour for a start, and fancied he had mistaken the time, as he does sometimes; but I am accustomed to take things as they come, so I got up without asking any questions, and it was Esther who informed me of the reason, as she had heard the men inquiring for me. So we took our midnight journey, very thankful to escape; not that our lives were in danger, as no doubt it was only money and goods they were seeking; but it might have gone badly with our good host if he had tried to defend us.

Cold and tired (it was no use being hungry), we reached at 3.30 a.m. a little roadside shelter, where we all crowded in and thankfully slept for two hours, then on again, reaching Maga at 9 a.m. As Bartimeus says, we are like the wheels of a cart, one moment in the dust, the next high in the sunshine, but anyway moving.

At Maga we experienced something of court life. Soutan, the chief, lives in great style, and is, I believe, the greatest chief in all Batta Land, and yet such a kind, friendly old man. He received us in the magnificent large verandah, attended by two aged brothers, who act as groom of the chambers and chief steward. The verandah was furnished with a row of armchairs, before which my bed was placed, a large round table in the centre, Soutan's carriage at one end, three large hanging lamps, and at each end a guest-chamber, and servants moving about. We were all accepted as guests, but in various grades. First, the servants brought a small table covered with a white cloth, two cups and saucers and sugar-basin, and placed it between Soutan and me, and we drank coffee and ate wafers exactly like the wafers eaten in England with ices. A mat was placed just beyond, on which our female party sat, but received no coffee. At the round table Bartimeus was placed with the two brothers of Soutan; and Bartimeus' nephew, the son of

Radja Benjamin, was fished out most unwillingly from among the coolies and made also to sit at the round table to drink coffee and eat wafers. All the coolies sat in a row on the floor with their backs to the verandah rails, looking rather awe-struck, and it was ten o'clock before they were dismissed to eat their rice.

Then my bed was taken into one of the guest-chambers where Esther and I were to sleep, and there we and the young wife of Soutan had our meals, waited on by three men-servants. The little table was brought in for me; the other two, with the rest of the dinner things, settled themselves on the great wooden bed. When speaking to the wife we had to call her 'the rich one' or 'we,' which made our utterances rather confused. But, oh, the mixture of old Batta ways! One of the old men who superintended our affairs thought, and perhaps rightly, that my glass was not quite clean, so he undid part of his turban and wiped it out with that, smiling so contentedly the while that one could not but smile with him.

Later on in the day arrived our good host from the little roadside eating-house, who could find no peace till he had heard that no one had waylaid us on the road, and then, being satisfied, he walked all the way back the same day.

The guest room at the other end of the verandah was given to the Bartimeus family, and the coolies had a separate house; but we insisted that they should not be beholden to Soutan for their food.

The next day Mr. Wiebe arrived, as we had sent to let him know we were on the road. He had a long talk with Soutan and his brothers, which was so far satisfactory that they have distinctly and apparently willingly arranged to provide the place for a house as soon as the permission comes; but there is not the faintest sign of a desire for Christianity on their part.

Next day, partly with the help of a carriage and a riding

horse for Bartimeus, we got through the twenty-five miles, so as to reach this place the same day. We started soon after 4 a.m., and we reached here at 7 p.m., receiving a hearty welcome from Mrs. Wiebe, with whom Esther and I are staying. Alas! there is no church, as after six years' labour there are not Christians enough to fill the dining-room.

There is a large grand school house, fitted up with every modern contrivance, but the schoolboys are almost entirely wanting. Whilst this house and grounds were being prepared, a great many workmen were employed—Mohammedans—and they and many people besides came every day to prayers, and the chief men said, 'We should all like to become Christians,' but as soon as they had received their wages they disappeared. There were forty schoolboys at first, but now there are perhaps six, and often none at all!

July 25.—I found Esther and I were far too much cut off at Mr. Wiebe's from the Bartimeus family, though they came every day; so now we have come over to share their little house, which has most kindly been vacated for us by the teacher and his wife, though, of course, we are providing other quarters for them.

We are a very happy and united family, and are quite content to wait here as long as God sees fit, for we feel we have much to learn before we are ready for our new work. At our last prayer-meeting our subject was Luke xvi. 10: 'He that is faithful in that which is least' (Little Mandailing for instance) 'is faithful also in much' (like Great Mandailing), and we feel that we must practise faithfully here what we hope some day to perform in Great Mandailing, one very special thing being the Malay language, which is more generally useful even than Batta. It is not a difficult language, and we have begun to meet twice a day now for a short lesson; and we have various visits from the people around, for which I am very thankful.

Before our wonderful journey is a thing of the past—for to 'little us' it seemed both great and wonderful—I must say how I was helped beforehand and at the start by our Mildmay text for the week beginning June 23: 'Thou, most Upright, dost weigh the path of the just' (Isa. xxvi. 7); and I knew that if 'the most Upright' weighed it, He would not let it come too heavily, even though all appearances were against me. However, I little dreamed how light everything would be, so that it often seemed as if the whole thing had been a carefully arranged pleasure trip, like the continental tours that people arrange for their own gratification! The scenery almost all the way was magnificent, so that I could hardly keep my eyes off it; wanted to look both ways at once, and was well enough to be able to enjoy it thoroughly. The climate and weather, with the exception of one short storm, were perfect, and I was always able to eat and sleep well, and altogether I felt myself the most capable one of the party. The fact was that the constant lying down and constant fresh air and no responsibilities—for I let Bartimeus manage everything—were like a tonic and a sedative combined.

July 28.—The luggage has come at last, having been two or three weeks crawling in a buffalo-cart from Sidempuan here, stopping for all the market days on the way.

Aug. 2.—Our kitchen would make you laugh. It is a detached building, and so large that the seventeen coolies all slept there; but, so far as I know, it contains *nothing*, certainly neither cupboard nor shelves, nor has it any chimney; but on the bare ground a fire is made, and there is a vast expanse of boarded floor about a foot higher than the ground, and the very day after we arrived Esther and Hinsa set to work to scrub or rub this vast expanse, not at all before it was wanted. This is a Christian family in the best sense of the word, a family that bears inspection, and

the children are so admirably brought up that it is a real pleasure to live in the midst of them.

Bartimeus is indefatigable in visiting all the villages around here, and his life must produce fruit, though these are the most idle, indifferent people I ever came across; not doing a scrap of work, many of them, except when forced by starvation; they are consequently miserably poor.

CHAPTER X

LIFE IN LITTLE MANDAILING

August 9, 1895, *to January* 23, 1896.

'O tarry thou the Lord's leisure.'—PSALM xxvii. 16 (Prayer Book version).

'Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'—MATT. iii. 2.

Muara Sipongi, Kota Nopan, Aug. 9, 1895.—You will be wondering if we find any work to do in this land of apparently absolute indifference, if not of hidden hostility. Oh yes, there is plenty of work, but you must be prepared to hear of work entirely different from that in Silindung. It is quite true that the Mohammedans here have only one God; but that god is their weekly market! They are filled with keenest interest about that, but they have no worship. There is no mosque here, and there are no priests; and if through failure of crops or any such felt misfortune they are driven to pray, they return to their old heathen custom, and pray to false gods till the misfortune is over. That a white woman and a family of Christians should have come to live for a while among them, seems to be a matter of supreme indifference.

This is not in the least disappointing or discouraging, as it is much what we expected, and we know quite well that there are hearts to be reached here just as much as

anywhere else in God's own way and time, and it is first-rate practice for our future work in Mandailing.

Here I was interrupted by a young woman named Domi, who perhaps is just one who possesses such a heart. Yesterday, market-day, an unknown young woman dropped in, not to see us, as she knew nothing about us, but to speak to a woman, a friend of hers, who happened to be in this room at the time. Thankful to see any stranger, I began to talk to her, and found she was formerly in Mr. Irle's district (of the Barmen Mission), but for the last two years had come to live about two miles from here. 'Why,' said Bartimeus, 'you must be the person I have heard about! Before leaving the north, Mr. Irle said to me, "If you go to Mandailing be sure you search out a woman who used to be with me."' This was Domi, who had not been searched for, but turned up in this wonderful way in Little Mandailing. I asked if she had ever been in this house before. She said, 'Never; the wife of the teacher often asked me, but I never came.' and she acknowledged that this time it must have been God's hand which led her. She had a dear, sweet little girl, not two years old; the only word she can say at present is 'father,' though her father died two months before she was born. I asked Domi to come and see me the next day, and she has actually done so, and shows willingness and aptitude to learn. Esther has of course made friends with her, and hopes to visit her. Not only this, but after we had had an hour together and the time came for going, three Christian women happened to look in; so with those four, Esther and Martha and Bartimeus and the children, we had a regular meeting, and Domi would not go till the whole thing was over; and I had been just on the point of writing that such a thing as a Bible class was absolutely out of the question!

But as to our more ordinary work.

Yesterday three or four people whom we knew, and who

were on their way to market, dropped in just as we were finishing breakfast. Anybody is always welcome, so we asked them to sit down, and they had the pleasure, and perhaps advantage, of watching our ways, as we went on as usual quite undisturbed. Esther collected the plates, one swept the matting, one fetched the water; then Esther washed up and I wiped, while Angelica, the second daughter, took the plates from our hands, and Hinsa, the eldest, arranged them on the shelf. As soon as everything was cleared away and in order, I read the Scripture portion for the day, Martha prayed, and all four children, one after the other, said her little grace or prayer, and a mite of a child from outside folded her hands in sympathy, and finally we all sang a verse of a hymn. A very large picture of Christ blessing little children happens to hang just over my bed, so this also was noticed and commented on by the outsiders. Who shall say after this, that it is not better for a missionary to sink her nationality and become a Batta with the Battas?

There are two or three houses so close to us that they must distinctly hear us singing four times a day, and a man lately said to Bartimeus, 'Your house used to be a house of tears (there was much quarrelling and evil going on), but now it has become a house of singing!' Being in the midst of people who are going to ruin through pride, idleness, and indifference, we are trying to force upon their notice that Christianity means humility, industry and joyful earnestness. Our house is always open, people can come in and out as much as they like, and always receive a welcome, though we never press them to come, and certainly, so far, no day has passed without some one looking in.

August 10.—Now about the Government permission to do mission work in Mandailing. Ever since coming to Sumatra I have had a Government permission to live anywhere I like in Netherlands India, in all such places as

are under the Dutch Government, and therefore I have a perfect right to live in Mandailing; only it seems I am not allowed to do what they call 'preach' without another special permission, such as all the male missionaries have. This has not hitherto been considered necessary for the mission sisters, no doubt because they were carrying on no independent work, and I thought if Bartimeus could get his permission I could go, as it were, under his shadow as a sort of Christian housekeeper, and I still think this may come to pass. It is a very absurd state of things, because already here I am 'preaching' to whatever audience I can get together, and without a preaching permission, only I suppose, if any disturbance happened, Mr. Wiebe would be responsible for me. His own preaching permission only extends to Little Mandailing, and it would only hinder matters if I actually joined this Baptist mission, because his committee in Europe have no wish at present to extend their work into another province. It is very interesting to stand, as it were, outside all this network of difficulties, and wait for the salvation of God. He has put such countless crooked things straight already that I can trust His power and willingness to put this also straight, and it is perhaps good that I cannot possibly do anything in the matter, as very likely I should only spoil things.

Aug. 18.—I forgot to tell you that we are here in a land of tigers. In the first fortnight of our coming to Sipongi a tiger came three times to this village, to a house only a few minutes distant, and always an hour or two after dark. Once he killed a cow, and wounded three others so badly that they had to be killed. Before we came he had actually killed and eaten a woman.

Some time ago I had rather a trial of faith, being more or less sick for two or three days. There seemed to be nothing at all that I could eat, though the Wiebes sent me their own food, besides trying various things here. Indeed,

their own food being a failure was a great comfort, as I had been tempted to wonder whether, after all, I could stand the native life and food, which seemed at first to have been such a great success. I cannot tell you my extreme thankfulness to find that it is indeed a confirmed success, for I am quite well again, enjoying the rice three times a day just as much as ever.

All these things are trifles, but our great joy is still in Domi, who has now come to us six times, and would like to be baptized. I purposely told her nothing about Sunday, and would give no invitation to come, to see if there would be a spontaneous coming; and sure enough this morning, just as we had finished breakfast and were going to read, in she walked, in her best jacket, and now she has gone to the church service with the others, in Mr. Wiebe's house, and I have asked her to dine with us and stay for the children's meeting which we hope to begin this afternoon. Six or seven children are now coming pretty regularly three afternoons in the week, and they came of themselves last Sunday, seeming to expect a meeting. Also we have begun a Bible class one morning in the week, to which Domi and three other women (half Christians) come, and always a prayer-meeting on Saturday morning, so we are getting on a little. There is no lack of mental work, with one or two Malay lessons every day, and a little preparation for our daily family reading, for which I am responsible. The weekly Bible class and prayer-meeting we conduct as far as possible in the Mandailing dialect, and the children's meetings in whatever of Malay we possess, as it is such very good practice.

It is quite beautiful to see how God has set His seal on our great step of leaving Sipoholon, as, actually, more people come to all the different meetings there than before, and it is evidently all alive there. There were so many prophecies that the whole work would collapse as soon as

I left, and I think on this very account God has stretched out His holy hand, to show that our thoughts are not His thoughts, and that He will choose His instruments according to His own will.

Sister Kate is very happy in her work and does not feel lonely, and I am sure I can most truly say the same. Esther, too, seems very content and happy; but she had a narrow escape, for I hear now that her brother had actually arranged with three companions to attack us on the road, and force her away from me and back to her village, and no doubt he would have carried out his purpose if we had not sent her off secretly two days before. The other day I received a very touching letter from Andreas, referring to the day of our departure, when so many went part of the way with us. Then when we parted, he said they would not go home, but remained there for an hour gazing southward. At last he reminded them that, though friends must part, there was no separation possible from the love of Christ, and made them repeat our last text (Romans viii. 39), and then most of them consented to go back, but some, like Esther's step-mother, followed on to Pansur-na-pitu.

Aug. 23.—Mr. Wiebe has been away for a night in Mandailing, to have an interview with the Dutch controlleur. As might have been expected, he is quite against the whole thing. Even for Bartimeus the permission must be obtained from the governor-general, although every Mohammedan hadji is free to build a mosque and preach his religion to his heart's content, and I do not believe I should even be allowed by him to live an ordinary housekeeper life in Mandailing. It would be asked, 'What is your object in living there?' and if I answered, 'Simply that the people may know what the ordinary Christian life is, and they would always be at perfect liberty to accept or reject it,' then they would say that this would be very dangerous, for if any were to become Christians, an uproar

might be the result, always laying the blame of everything on the Christians! The controlleur volunteered to say he was himself a religious man; so Mr. Wiebe replied, 'Then why do you try to hinder us from obeying Christ's command to go to all lands?' 'Yes,' he said, 'that is all very well, only not to Mandailing.' The fact is, this is practically a Mohammedan Government, and it is the old story, 'We will not have this man (Christ Jesus) to reign over us.' The controlleur very politely said he would at once favour our views, if his superior, the resident, consented, and advised our waiting for about a month, when he would probably be passing through Sipongi on his way from Padang, and speak direct to him.

In the meantime Bartimeus says very wisely, 'The cause of hindrance and delay may perhaps not so much lie with others, as with ourselves.' 'Is it in me? Is it in me?' So this morning I translated for them that very searching Sankey hymn, No. 422, and we had a most solemn, helpful time before God.

We are filled with praise and thankfulness at His faithfulness in constantly leading and educating the souls of His servants. We have also much pleasure in the children, who enjoy coming to us, including our smallest scholar, a fat and solemn and silent child perhaps three years old, who sits and folds her hands, but utters not a word. Gompul is her name, which means 'Bear.'

Sept. 4.—The blessing here is manifest; such an extremely nice house at once put at our disposal, with no thought of asking rent, although the proper price to give would be about thirty-two shillings a month. Of course I could not go on accepting such a favour, and have just bought the house for about £20, which is absurdly cheap. The large kitchen is all falling to pieces and must be rebuilt, and certainly I must be very fond of building houses, for I am looking forward to the process with great pleasure,

and when all is finished, and the newly made kitchen-garden beginning to be productive, perhaps we shall have the further pleasure of leaving it all, to go to Mandailing; but whether there or here, all will be well.

The few children who come to our meetings three times a week are most fascinating; at least three of them are. These are the daughters of a Mohammedan, who lives close by, and they go home and sing the hymns we have taught them; and I heard yesterday that the mother expresses herself as much pleased and interested, which I sincerely hope is really the case, and I have invited her to come to one of our children's meetings. When the children have said good-bye, and are supposed to have gone home, they will all appear again at the verandah window, for another good-bye; and if one appears alone, and I go and stroke her face, the others at once follow suit one by one to have their faces stroked too.

The women's meetings, on Wednesday morning, are also most interesting, though only three or four come from outside. Two of these, Domi and the teacher's wife, both Mohammedans, are now preparing for baptism, and are beginning to come to me separately to be taught.

One man I had the great privilege of visiting in his own house, and the delight of finding myself walking along the high-road, such a beautiful road, was very great. It was only the second house on the other side, so the distance was not great, and two of them carried the bed and put it ready in his house, and he gave us coffee and was very pleasant; but even Bartimeus found it rather difficult to make our conversation intelligent, as he spoke another dialect of Malay. He soon after returned the visit, and said he had a brother living in Maga, and he hoped when we went there that we would make friends with him. I thought that in this way we might visit many of our neighbours; but, alas! Mr. Wiebe is seized with fright, and hopes

that I will not pay any more visits, not having got a Government permission to 'work' here! He says that in these southern provinces we missionaries are like a thorn in the flesh of the Government officials, which I can well believe.

Sept. 16.—At last we can send the glad tidings that Mrs. Bartimeus had a fine fat little son born on September 12. Two or three friendly neighbours had been called by Bartimeus, but arrived just after the event, and straightway carried Martha to her little box, where she and the baby have been stewing ever since, with a small wood fire burning day and night within a few inches of her back, according to Batta custom. The teacher and his wife and our faithful Domi also almost constantly live there. How such a number, with one or two extra babies, can manage the cooking and sleeping and eating that have to go on there I cannot think; anyway, they are well and happy, and that is the chief thing, and Martha would sadly miss it if her room were not always stuffed full of people, and the mutual spiritual help in our work these past days has been priceless. *They* see a Christian family who are in sore need of help, but who have willingly isolated themselves for the spread of the Gospel; and *we* see two women, Domi and the teacher's wife, brought up in Mohammedanism, with all their relatives Mohammedans, who have not only been coming to our meetings and preparing for an outward baptism, but are now helping us day and night, washing the baby, sweeping, cooking, clearing up, chopping wood, and anything else, as Bartimeus also has been unwell for three days, and had to lie down or sit by his wife. Mr. Wiebe is our doctor, as are all the missionaries more or less, but he seems to have experience and knowledge as well as unfailing kindness.

You see, in our little circle of eight, now nine, we have the two elements of power—seven representing the family

life, and two representing the special dedication of even that, so as to be free for work among outsiders. Bartimeus says that if Esther holds out, which I believe she will, during the special temptations of the next three or four years, there will not be such another woman in all Sumatra, choosing a single life for the Gospel's sake. The small one is to be named Moses, in the hope that he will be used to lead his people out of spiritual bondage, and draw them to the Rock of Ages.

Sept. 21.—Bartimeus and I conduct the prayer-meeting by turns, and it was his turn to-day, and I observed again what had already struck me on former occasions, that, probably unconsciously to himself, he has attained the highest form of worship, namely *Praise*, and seems quite unable to get out of it: so that we concluded our meeting, I may almost say without having asked for anything, and without even definite thanks for definite benefits, but rather that higher platform of thanking Him for what He is, and for the grand obedient worship of His dumb creation. I felt as if it would be like an impertinence to intrude personal requests into such a meeting, especially as we have a quiet opportunity every Sunday evening for that.

Sept. 23.—The controlleur, who was over here on business the other day and had a talk with Mr. Wiebe, has given his gracious permission for me to visit in this neighbourhood as much as I like. One great difficulty of our work is that the women and girls are so afraid of us. Yesterday a girl, apparently attracted by the singing, came and looked in at us from the verandah. We invited her to come in, which she would not do, and so, with more zeal than wisdom, I went out, but before I could reach the verandah she was gone; seeing me get up was quite enough to scare her away. This no doubt will be overcome, but it will be a work of time.

Another great difficulty is the language, as besides Malay

and Batta there is the Ulu language. These Ulu people are very ignorant, and extremely poor, owing to their own idleness, and we cannot undertake to learn Ulu, as it would be of no use to us when we leave; so we have to do the best we can with kind looks and ways, and scraps of other languages. Bartimeus is a great help, as he understands what they say, though he is not fluent in speaking, and the teacher's wife and Domi are also of great use as interpreters.

Sept. 28.—It was with great awe and solemnity that I read yesterday, first the terrible account of our murdered friends in China, and immediately afterwards, in the August *Gleaner*, those two grand letters from Mr. Horsburgh and Mr. Hickman, telling of manifest success and progress, such as no one could gainsay. Certainly those lives were not lived in vain, and will not have been laid down in vain.

Oct. 13.—Three months yesterday since we arrived in Sipongi, and one month yesterday since little Moses was born. For the last few days we have set up a kind of little servant, or rather another son, named Sali, a poor little fatherless boy, about eight years old and utterly destitute, a dear child, and we are as glad as he is to be brought thus together. Though his mother, a most unsatisfactory woman, attends the services and classes from time to time, he has never learned to pray, so now we are teaching him.

Nov. 3.—We had such a beautiful day last Sunday. Little Moses was dedicated to God in the morning, and we eleven Christians in this little community had the Lord's Supper together in the evening. They carried me to the Wiebes' soon after breakfast, so as to enjoy first the usual Sunday service with the others. I stayed up there for dinner and for the afternoon, and about 7 p.m. we, the eleven, gathered round the Lord's Table. Then we came home in the lovely moonlight.

Nov. 21.—I wonder if it is as difficult to help the poor at home as it is here. Although we have not the drink to contend against, *thank God*, yet we have two powerful enemies who have taken firm hold of the people, pride and idleness. A man and his wife keep an eating-house close by, and as Bartimeus told me they were extremely poor, I said I would give them a sack of rice, and he went to tell the man to fetch it. As the man did not come he called again, and the wife said, 'My husband is gone out, and no doubt forgot it.' So it was arranged for the wife to send for the rice: but she never did so. They would have borrowed money to any extent, with no power or intention of paying it back, but they would rather starve than receive rice, as if they were poor people. I asked Bartimeus how he knew they were so poor; and he said because the man could no longer find any one who would lend him money. Many of the people have gold ornaments and diamond rings, but they would rather starve, and let their children run not only nearly but quite naked, than sell these proofs of their nobility.

Nov. 22.—Yesterday something practical was done through the energy and prompt courage of Mr. Nikkel. A formal request in the name of this Baptist mission was sent to the governor-general at Batavia, asking permission to extend their work to Great Mandailing. This has been signed by Mr. Nikkel and Mr. Wiebe, and sent by post.

With the exception of four families all the people here are professed Mohammedans, and no doubt if the Government expressed a strong wish in the matter they would all become professed Christians. As it is they work against us in all sorts of ways. It is certain that many children would willingly come to us, but they are threatened and forbidden by their elders. Badarun, a poor little half-starved boy, used to delight in coming to us. We made him supremely happy with a jacket, and once he dined

with us; but now he has been frightened, the jacket has disappeared, and if he comes it is only for a moment or two, and then he darts away, and will not speak. On the other hand, a little girl, who is not allowed to come here, has learned one of our hymns from a former scholar, and is great friends with Esther as long as they keep on the high-road.

Dec. 5.—I am already beginning to feel that when our marching orders come, it will be rather a heart-breaking business to leave our dear Ulu people, with so many of whom we have now made friends. We are often having, not set Bible classes, but impromptu family parties which develop into the same thing.

Dec. 8.—Such an interesting year this is, corresponding with the dates of six years ago. Yesterday, Saturday, I, six years ago, left Padang for Siboga, gazing all day at the Sumatra mountains with a kind of awe and wonder at what the future would contain, but little imagining the extent of love and blessing and length of days that were in store.

Dec. 19.—Sister Kate, after all, remains in Sipoholon at Mr. Nommensen's request, as Dr. Schreiber is now willing to let Miss Emily Dutton come out as her companion Well, may the Lord give His blessing to this new experiment, that the result may be peace, and not confusion or misunderstanding, for two sisters working in a German mission without understanding German is certainly a difficulty.

Dec. 26.—Such a lovely Christmas we have had. On Tuesday, Christmas Eve, Mr. Wiebe had the school beautifully decorated with palm branches and flowers, with about twenty tapers twinkling out, and lighting up pictures of angels and shepherds. Before this sat my tiny flock of scholars for their examination, which I had arranged something like a Christmas Service of Song. They answered

and sang beautifully, repeating among other things eight texts. All, except some of the hymns, was in Malay. The last hymn was specially striking. Each verse had three divisions; the girls sang the first, the boys the next, and we all came out strong in the chorus. The chorus of the last verse was intensified with hand-clapping, which was also done quite correctly, marking the time, and we were carried away with the spirit of the words, 'Oh, that will be joyful.' But perhaps the most striking was a hymn sung by our two small ones, Stacey and Priscilla, five and four years old. They sat out in front of the others close together, I singing with them in a low voice, and between the verses they hugged and cuddled and kissed each other, but after a moment or two of this enjoyment they returned to duty, each sitting demurely with folded hands. It was a very natural performance, which they had done spontaneously in our home lessons, and it only wanted a little regulating. So we had an object lesson on the love that was brought into the world! At the close Mr. Wiebe gave an address, and before leaving all the children present received a handful of good things to eat. There were nineteen children, including the visitors, and seventeen grown-ups, one of the visitors being a hadji.

On Christmas morning we had service like Sunday, and I have begun now to go too, for the sake of four Mohammedan men whom I have engaged permanently to carry my bed, as this gives them a good opportunity of attending without being laughed at. Then they return here, and drink coffee, and have a talk.

Dec. 28.—The visiting of the people here is interesting, though slow compared to Silindung. There it was considered the correct thing for the village to assemble in the house which we visited; here each house has to be taken separately, although even here people do often drop in. Once as many as nine men came in and were quiet

pounding rice. hoeing. bearers to take her to a village.

HOUSE AT MUARA SIPONGI, LITTLE MANDAILING.

listeners, but I have myself only been to about ten houses as yet, many things coming in to hinder. At no house have we been refused an entrance, though, in the gossip of the market, Bartimeus has heard people tell each other that they will do so.

The native Mohammedan magistrate, who holds the chief position in Sipongi, with his wife, have treated us with most marked respect. Once Bartimeus said, after receiving a very special salaam from this man, 'Why do you, sir, treat me with such unexpected respect?' 'Because I know you are a servant of God.' This testimony gave me much joy, especially as both these people are natives of Mandailing. So you see some people are accessible, and some are not, as everywhere else.

Jan. 15, 1896.—This week we had a grand time. There is a crippled young man, extremely poor, who lives five miles off in a wretched little house, with six sisters, all orphans, only cared for by their widowed grandmother; so by dint of a so-called 'self-denial' week or two we saved up a nice sum of money, which I was only sorry we could not all take together to give him, but it was too far. On Monday, after dinner, Bartimeus and Esther and I set off, but, to quiet Mr. Wiebe's mind, we had also to take the teacher Johannes. The people in that village, though sometimes very friendly, would not let Mr. Wiebe take a house there, as he wished to do, and he said we might quite possibly be left to spend the night in the street, as we did not mean to come back the same day. The road was most lovely, a mountain path skirting a narrow valley, weather perfect the whole time. Close by the village my men, foolishly or ignorantly, chose a short cut through a wood, a very steep ascent. They would not let me get out, but the men were tired, and it was only by dint of Johannes, Esther, and Bartimeus lending a helping shoulder that the final struggle ended in victory, and I was deposited

in the village street, where Esther and I waited a long time, not knowing what the others were doing nor where they were gone.

They were seeking a lodging for us. The oldest chief was away somewhere, and some one had to go after him to ask permission, which was granted to the grandmother of our cripple, who possessed a large house. We meantime were making acquaintance with the women, who were friendly; but the poor cripple himself, for whose sake we had come, though consenting to shake hands, looked thoroughly frightened and miserable, perhaps feeling that he would get into trouble through our visit. They could not manage to get the bed in at the door of the house, but happily it effected an entrance through the window. So there we were established, and people in ones and twos came in and heard our message about the kingdom of God, while our men were making preparations to cook the supper. We had brought enough rice for one meal for ourselves and the family we went to visit, and bought from the people a fowl, oil for a lamp, &c., and then came the question whether these Mohammedans would consent to eat with Christians or not. They certainly required a great deal of persuasion, but this may have been mere shyness, and at last we all gathered round plates and cups, sixteen people in all.

After supper we had a beautiful time. More people came in, amongst others the young chief of the village, till we were a party of nearly thirty. There was no arguing, but a quiet listening to the singing, preaching, and prayer, and the people were quite unwilling to go. We had ourselves to break up the meeting. Then all the men of our party went off to sleep in the house of the cripple, while Esther and I stayed with the friendly old lady and her little grand-daughters, and she provided every one with sleeping-mats. Nothing could be more

comfortable, and I am sure we may be very thankful, knowing that once in a village Mr. Wiebe and Mr. Nikkel had to camp out in the street, and were pelted with stones and mud.

By sunrise next day we were off. The great advantage of sleeping in the villages is that you get the people together in the evening after their return from their rice fields. In the daytime a village is almost deserted.

Bartimeus has found a very interesting work here, among countless other works; this is to go out every Wednesday evening with Christian[1] and preach, in one or other of the five little wayside inns, to the people who come from a distance to the Thursday market, and spend the previous night in one of the shelters. It is marvellous to me that these two good men are allowed to do so, but we seem on every side to be finding open doors. In this way they often come across people from Mandailing, and the other night they found there one of Bartimeus' friends, one to whom he had given a Gospel a year ago. The man said he kept reading this, but that it made him very sorrowful.

Jan. 23.—This day being my fifty-third birthday, I must say what you have often heard before, that this last year has been better and richer than all those that have gone before—more practical experience of God's saving power, and the absolute certainty of a way of escape in every temptation, and the richness of His love poured out perpetually like the streams from these mountains, and like the light which almost forces itself every morning through the chinks of our wooden walls, even before we rouse ourselves to open the window.

I have just been interrupted by the entrance of the postmaster's second wife, whom he has just married, and who came to pay her first visit. I told her our only object in

[1] A native teacher.

coming was to preach the Gospel. 'Yes, and I should like to hear your Gospel; please tell me.' So I told her how that, being all sinners, we had separated ourselves from God and become children of Satan; but God in His great love did not like that, and sent His Son to set us free from sin, that we might all become children of God, that all the wicked people should become good, and all the dirty ones become clean—that this was the meaning of conversion. She was much interested in the two large pictures lent us by Mr. Wiebe. Christ blessing the Children and the Widow's Son raised to life, also the *Gleaner* portraits of the eight murdered in China.

Let no one think I am much of a walker yet. I did go on foot to a woman seven houses off, but was dead beat, and had to send for men and bed to take me back; felt the effects for about a month, spine all in a quiver, so now I am more careful.

Let not any one imagine we live in a hut! It is a very superior whitewashed cottage, with high-pitched cocoa-nut fibre roof, and pretty trellis-work verandah, standing off from the road in its own well-ordered grounds, everything small but good of its kind. I was going to say I feel very free and happy in my present surroundings, but that would not be true; indeed, there is much in them that might do the contrary; but most thankfully can I say I feel most thoroughly free and happy in my Saviour, who daily proves Himself strong to deliver.

Esther. Angelica. Martha. Bartimeus.

MISS NEEDHAM AND THE BARTIMEUS FAMILY.

CHAPTER XI

APPROACHING THE GOAL

January 27 to April 25, 1896.

'He led them forth by the right way.'—Ps. cvii. 7.
Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come.'—Hab. ii. 3.

Jan. 27, 1896.—The special fascination of this work is ts difficulty and success, and also that it is so specially God-given, fresh every day, not fixed and planned beforehand, as in Silindung. In the half-year that we have been here, we have been slowly but steadily gaining the confidence, love, and respect of some of our Mohammedan neighbours. Lately a remarkable meeting of the chiefs was called (not the first of the kind) to consider which of the three 'religions'—Christianity, Mohammedanism, and Heathenism—it would be most advisable to adopt! but they came to no definite decision. It will not be our fault if all Sipongi does not know by heart at least one text and one prayer: 'Repent ye [change your heart]: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,' and 'Create in me a clean heart, O God,' as we teach it on every possible occasion, even if people only call for a few minutes.

But I must tell you about our expedition of one night to andjung Meden, four miles off. The last mile, which lay off the direct road, was both bad and dangerous, and we

had to cross a river, or rather a torrent of water rushing over and round great boulders. The *we* means Bartimeus, whose courage and pluck are simply marvellous, his guide being our boy Sali (a child who delights to go anywhere), my ever-faithful girl Esther, the teacher Christian, who is a great friend of ours, and the four men carrying me on that old covered bed which has already done such good service in Silindung, and is quite accustomed to be hauled about and twisted and strained in all sorts of ways. These men are still rather inexperienced, and two are little more than lads, though all are willing and faithful. The last half-mile was almost enough to bring one's heart into one's mouth at every step: a narrow path cut in the side of an inaccessibly steep mountain, with the torrent rushing at the bottom, and the way further impeded by a mass of undergrowth on the upward side. I do not wish to exaggerate, but at one spot where the struggling men had to stop and rest, I could feel that one foot of the bed was not on solid ground, and I saw besides that the men were carefully holding that corner, so narrow was the path, and at every step I kept expecting them to say they could get no further. However, through God's never-ceasing goodness, we managed to struggle on to the end.

Our coming, which was unexpected, was greeted by some of the village lads with a death-wail and a laughing chorus, and this was highly excusable, when we remember the hearse-like vehicle which they suddenly saw slowly approaching; but we knew that in the main the village was friendly, and one of the chiefs, of which there are four, agreed to let any Christian teachers have the use of his house for the night on paying half a rupee. On arriving at his house, all our party informed me that the bed could not be got in either at the door or window. However, there was nothing like trying, and after a little hesitation it wriggled in quite nicely.

Of course our first act was an act of worship, and the second was to send some men to clear the road by cutting away the plants which were choking it up. We had various opportunities during the afternoon and evening of preaching, or rather talking over the Gospel with the principal men and women of the place, but after supper there was a lull, and so, being left to ourselves, we 'went to bed': that is to say, Esther lay down on a mat close to me, Bartimeus and Christian in the little inner room, Sali and the four men in another house; but we kept the light burning, as the door had no bolt, and even if it had, any one could climb over one unfinished wooden wall. By 'going to bed' you must not for a moment imagine that it means undressing; on the contrary, it means, at any rate for me, putting on an extra jacket and wrapping myself up in my red blanket; so we went to sleep a little, and I tried not to think of the narrow road.

After a while two or three women came in and sat down near us. That was all right, as we had asked the women of the house to sleep there as usual, only instead of sleeping they kept talking and smoking together, and very foolishly I began asking myself whether the probable result of the visit was worth the danger of the way—foolishly, because I was not responsible for the road, not having known its condition beforehand. Then some men came in, then more women and more men, and all sat down. By my feelings it must have been then near midnight, but as I have been without clock or watch for the last five months, I cannot tell for certain. Esther and I made no move, but they knocked up the teacher Christian. Bartimeus was not well, and did not respond. One, however, was enough, and Christian did his work beautifully. These good people not being able to come by day had come by night, to give us a greeting and ask about our religion, and the people said, 'It is good.' When they had had enough, they went away,

except three women, who I suppose belonged to the house, and they went to sleep.

By sunrise next morning we were off, with a previous intention on my part of keeping my eyes shut during the first mile, but that precaution (?) I am thankful to say was no longer needed. The six men employed under the direction of the chiefs had done their work so well, that there was always a good foothold, and the men's feet were already almost in the torrent, ready for the last struggle, before I thought we had gone a third of the way. But the best part was afterwards. The next day, thinking the matter over, it seemed the right and pleasant thing to pay those six men half a day's work each, and to invite the four chiefs to come and drink coffee with us the next market day.

Jan. 30.—And they all came, and three of their women too. That was a great pleasure; so we at once sent word to Mr. Wiebe that he might come too, and in the meantime I talked to them on my favourite subject, the kingdom of God, and finding one of them could read, I got him to read out the passages in the Malay Testament. Strange to say, their Koran is only in Arabic, which no one here understands, and in that language it is read to, if not by, people who know nothing of the meaning! Then Mr. Wiebe came, and we had a long meeting. We parted apparently much pleased with one another, and I fully understood that the difficulties and dangers of the road were the very means God had chosen to bring about such a meeting.

You must not imagine, when I venture to talk of this work as being successful, it means that there is any one who really has the slightest intention of adopting Christianity. The four men who carry me say, 'Mohammedanism is no good; it is a mere outward religion, and we all of us have decided for Christianity.' This sounds very plausible, and many other people have said the same; but when we said,

'Prove it by coming to our Saturday prayer-meeting,' not one of them came. The success that I mean is that we have power and opportunity here to live out Christianity in the very midst of the people. If our voices are raised in the courtyard, the neighbours can hear it. If our singing is clear and our meetings regular, the neighbours must needs see and hear, and so far all their houses are open to us, although they know perfectly well by this time that paying a visit means preaching the Gospel.

On our return from our last village expedition we found the neighbours had been most kind in visiting Bartimeus' wife, who, of course, always stays at home with the children, and one girl even spent the night here, to be a companion to Hinsa in Esther's absence. But, humanly speaking, we are entirely in the hands of the chiefs. If they become Christians, all the others would follow, though that would not be a Christianity much worth having.

Feb. 4.—I am lost in admiration of Esther's strong firm character. She has her faults, but it is evident she means to win, and has set herself to obey whatever she believes to be right, especially everything that I tell her, and she is as true as gold in all her personal services to me, always knowing what to do and when to do it. This is specially helpful when we go to spend the night in a strange village. Six years ago she was a heathen, and I only wish I had made as much progress in those six years.

Feb. 6.—In talking of Esther I must by no means forget to say that with all her housemaid qualities she is a thorough missionary, and knows how to make the most of her opportunities. It was beautiful to hear the sisterly way in which she explained to a woman the meaning of conversion, mentioning the commonest sins of the women here, and saying that these sins must cease. One of Sali's fascinations is that since he has discovered my love of flowers, he searches for new ones in the forest, and I am apt to find stuck up

in a corner of my shelf a bouquet of flowers, the stalks tied up in paper and string, a little gift which he is too shy to present personally.

Feb. 15.—We lately went to a village eight miles off, but there was no one able to take us in, so we had to go half a mile further to a large roadside eating-house. In the evening I saw for the first time the Mohammedan form of worship. Our landlady reached down a mat, spread it on the floor, wrapped herself up in a long white garment which covered her head, and went through various prostrations and semi-prostrations, with pauses between, apparently repeating prayers, but not audibly. It was very interesting and striking and impressive, when one realizes that she too was trying to worship the one true God; and after supper I read and spoke to them of what Jesus said to the woman of Samaria about true worship.

Certainly Mohammedanism is a mystery. Is it allowed to gain such strength because of the truth that is in it, or is the whole thing a fulfilment of the word, 2 Thess. ii. 11, that people should believe a lie? It seems such a mixture of truth and lies. A sheikh in all his grandeur passed through here the other day, and a poor woman humbly asked if she might be allowed to kiss his hand. He graciously consented, but covered his 'holy' hand with his handkerchief before extending it to her. I always think, 'What would Jesus say' to this or that? I think He would speak to the people much as He spoke to the Pharisees of old.

Workmen have been constantly engaged about the premises, which may now be considered in a perfect state—lovely bath-house, woodshed, guest-room, large kitchen; and now the garden, a former waste ground and Esther's special charge, which has been neatly fenced in, is just beginning to *produce vegetables*, and now we hope soon to move on and leave it. Well, I consider all this greatly to our advantage, that is to say, to the advantage of the

work, as it will force the people to confess that a higher motive than self-interest is at work amongst us.

Feb. 27.—Your welcome letter of January 12 arrived yesterday. You say, 'You will be glad when you can more definitely get to work.' I have not the very slightest human expectation of getting 'more definitely' into work as long as I live, than is the case at this moment, so it would be a poor look out if my gladness depended on that. On the contrary, if the Lord is so wonderfully good as to allow us the joy and honour of going to Great Mandailing, there will probably be outwardly less definite work than here, for the simple reason that in that place there are no Christians at all, while here at any rate there is a little handful who come very regularly on Wednesdays and Saturdays. If mission work is right at all, and if it is also to include Mohammedan countries, *this* most certainly *is* right, being contained in the divine commission. I do not see now, any more than I did in 1889, how to avoid deliberately stepping out of definite into the very indefinite work of witnessing for Christ any *how* and any *when* in the midst of a self-satisfied and antagonistic people, and suffering the just retribution of those miserable and sleepy or ignorant Christians (I myself at any rate one of the last named) who allowed Mohammedanism to step in fifty years ago, where Christians were asked for and Christians were wanted.

We have perhaps here many scholars who never come to a class; the overseer's wife next door is certainly one. She watches us closely every day, and asks Esther all sorts of questions about our goings-on; and all that we do is known at once all along the village street. Even from one village to another the news has spread that we are penetrating everywhere, that every Monday we start off for some village or other, spending obviously both money and strength, with the sole object of spreading the Gospel of Christ.

These Mohammedans understand the fear of God thoroughly, some of them, perhaps, better than we do, but seem as yet incapable of taking in His fatherly love, which is, of course, the central point of the whole New Testament. They seem quite shocked at the bare idea of being God's children. 'God is great and holy,' they say, 'and we are far off, like mere dust in comparison.'

The other day we made an expedition, our whole family of ten people, to Pakanten, nine miles off, where Mr. and Mrs. Nikkel live, and stayed the night. I had never seen her or their three little children, so it was high time we went; especially as we are not likely ever to go there when we go further off. Mrs. Nikkel is unfortunately very deaf, so we could have hardly any conversation, but I had some talks with many Christians from their district who came to call. I stayed with the Nikkels in their very simply furnished house, the other nine stayed in the teacher's house not far off. On our way home we called on a blind hadji, who lived just by the roadside. He was sitting in quiet dignity in his white turban and robe, and we sang him a Malay hymn about starting for the heavenly city.

March 3.—Oh, that resident! Last Friday Bartimeus and Guru Johannes started off for Laru, to look out a house for us there, and also to pay a little visit to the chief at Maga, in Great Mandailing. They had gone a little more than ten miles when the news arrived, 'The resident is coming to Sipongi, and is already at Kota Nopan'; so they were actually obliged to return, as the resident may possibly be bringing us either a permission to work in Mandailing, or a letter forbidding us to do so.

March 4.—Well, that resident never came after all, although triumphal arches were made in his honour. The fact was he had got the usual intermittent fever, poor man. Well, the upshot of it is that, with Mr. Wiebe's fullest sym-

pathy and cordial concurrence, I have now started another plan, and have written to Mr. Purdy, the Bible Society's agent, who is now in Penang, asking if he will kindly accept me and Bartimeus as his colporteurs in Great Mandailing, I, of course, undertaking to pay our two salaries; and if he can procure for us a proper official permission, we can walk straight into Maga without staying at Laru.

March 8.—My own dear Sister Thora and fellow-soldier has completely broken down; chest, throat, and fever all combined. She is gone to Toba, carried on a bed, so as to live with Sister Lisette and the Steinsicks.

March 11.—Since writing the above, to our great joy, and quite unexpectedly, on Monday morning, arrived Radja Benjamin, the brother of Bartimeus, from Pansur-na-pitu. He has six companions, men, and there are some more coming, we hear. These guests cause no trouble whatever to provide for, owing to our beautiful back premises. All seven sleep either in the kitchen or in the adjoining room, and they take turns, three at a time, to help with the cooking, so we are seventeen now for meals three times a day.

You may be sure we make the most of these gatherings, so that the food for the soul should always have the pre-eminence; and for the mid-day gathering I have chosen the Epistle to the Ephesians, a few verses each day, that this may be a special remembrance of the visit. After supper we can have no fixed rule, either as to chapter or language, as we are inviting our leading Mohammedan friends, one at a time, to have supper with us, to meet King Benjamin, as they are allowed to eat after sunset even in this fasting month.

March 16.—To-day, Sunday, Benjamin, at the request of Mr. Wiebe, gave a little address at the close of the service. One felt it was the address of a proud man, though I believe he is really wishing to do right, especially here in our

midst; and now it is afternoon, and most of them have gone to the little 5.30 p.m. meeting, and I am left alone in the midst of lovely flowers. This morning after breakfast I found a lovely bouquet in my bedroom. That was Esther! This afternoon I found my bed in this room decorated with flowers, gathered by our six-years-old Stacey, and arranged by four-years-old Priscilla, and then in came Sali, with three sprays most beautifully tied and twisted together! One would say it was some fête day, but it was only because they know I am fond of flowers. Certainly these children are irresistibly fascinating.

March 23.—Three days ago our guests left us, and Bartimeus with them, to make a little tour through Mandailing. Bartimeus will have to hurry back with his guide, so as to be back here for Good Friday.

March 29.—Yesterday, to our surprise and joy, Bartimeus returned, much sooner than we expected, but having visited more than all the old places and spoken with more than all the old friends, and the result is that at this moment there are no less than seven places in Mandailing where I should very much like to live. Bartimeus is a man who is always beholding the sunshine and ignoring the shadows, and his account is that all the people seem tired of Mohammedanism, and would gladly receive us and our teaching, and keep asking, 'When is the lady coming?' This sounds very wonderful, but I must always remember what happened to Mr. Wiebe on his first coming here. The head chief said that he and all his people would gladly receive him, and would embrace Christianity; but his beautiful house was hardly finished before they all, to a man, fell away.

April 5.—On his return Bartimeus fell in with a poor leper boy near the south border of Mandailing; he was an orphan and quite forsaken by his people, so dear Bartimeus at once took measures to have a decent hut made for him, and we hope to take up this child and

provide for him wholly, and that Bartimeus will go back to Laru to-morrow, and take some little gifts from us and see that the hut is really built. This is indeed a beautiful beginning to our work in Mandailing, and there is a friendly overseer at Laru who will probably carry out our wishes, as he has already shown compassion for the child. Yesterday came the news that my beloved Sister Thora must return to Europe, at any rate for a time.

April 7.—This morning a letter came from Mr. Purdy enclosing a paper, 'I hereby appoint Bartimeus a colporteur of the British and Foreign Bible Society from the above date (March 23). His district is to be Great Mandailing, and to work under the superintendence of Miss N.' To all this I have only one thing to say, which is, 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.' I believe this paper, with what I already possess, is enough for all possible purposes; but to make security doubly sure Mr. Purdy is writing to his superior in Singapore, to get a special appointment also for me, as he himself has only power to appoint native helpers. The letter came just after breakfast, but before the washing up and prayers; so when they were all assembled, and I had read our morning portion out of Bogatzky, I told them, and, as it was Martha's turn to lead the prayers, she had the joy of the thanksgiving, and we sang the Batta version of 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.' It seemed a very small thanksgiving for a very great blessing, but I hope what may yet remain of our lives may be all thanksgiving. Next Saturday, at about 6 p.m., it will be seven years since the Lord called me to Mandailing, and perhaps about 6.15 p.m. since I said and sung, 'Yes, Lord Jesus.' How good, and grand, and absolutely necessary, all the waiting time has been to all of us!

But the tears will have to come into our eyes too, in the midst of the joy. This morning, after the Bible class,

when I had to tell the women that our Wednesdays were coming to an end, at once the tears came into the eyes of the one who has been with us from the beginning. Our subject was what the angel said to the women, 'I know that ye seek Jesus.' A Mohammedan woman 'happened' to be at our meeting, having come, not to seek Jesus, but to seek work, and my answer to her had to be, 'There is none'; but during the meeting she learnt that there is no disappointment to those who seek Jesus. It is beautiful to see the way in which Esther and Martha have taken this news, that any day now we may have to leave this lovely little house, with its surroundings. Esther is as faithful as ever in the garden, planting or weeding that others may profit by it, which is just as it should be.

April 14.—Mr. Purdy has power to appoint a native colporteur, but it is only his superior who can give a European appointment, and I am still awaiting a telegram. We had a happy day of packing yesterday, and you may be sure I am rejoicing more than ever at our few belongings, so that the various complications of such a 'family removing' are reduced to a minimum.

April 18.—To-day Bartimeus returned, having, before witnesses, agreed for us to hire the wished-for house at Malintang for six rupees a month, a moderate price. There we hope to remain till the new house is ready to be erected in Maga or elsewhere; but it is such a much more central position, that I hope very much to be able to buy it, as one of our future houses. Our poor leper boy has been removed to his own neighbourhood by order of the chief, as soon as he heard that we were caring for him, and this is good and proper, if he really does so thoroughly. Bartimeus took with him twelve Scripture portions, but was not able to sell one, which somewhat agrees with Mr. Purdy's experience, who says that every year it is becoming more difficult to sell the Scriptures in Mandailing.

Malintang is exactly on the high-road north, and Mr. Nikkel's teachers go through it three or four times a year, when they go to Sidempuan to fetch his money; whereas Maga lies off the high-road some distance. It is curious that the people seem willing to receive us, although apparently keeping fast hold of their own religion.

April 23.—Well done, Bishop Selwyn! I have just read in a German paper his answer to the question, 'What can I do for Christ?' 'Go where He is not, and take Him with you!' That is what I call concentrated essence of missionary teaching.

Mr. Nikkel came over on Tuesday, thinking we were leaving the next day, and highly approves of my buying the house at Malintang, if possible. He is undertaking and making easy all the complications of getting my money from Padang. Certainly both he and Mr. Wiebe have been kindness itself in all business matters, and, humanly speaking, I should never have been able to get on without their help.

Since writing the above, the controlleur has actually arrived in his gig, but—to everybody's consternation—he only stayed about ten minutes, and went straight on to Pakanten. However, I have written a note to Mr. Nikkel, and sent it off by a special messenger; so whether the controlleur sleeps at Pakanten or comes back here, one or other of the missionaries must needs be able to come in contact with him.

April 24.—Now the controlleur has returned from Pakanten, where Mr. Nikkel talked a little with him in a preliminary way, and since then Mr. Wiebe has had a long talk over the whole matter, from which this at any rate is clear (though I nearly knew it before), that I can go and live in Mandailing or anywhere else, and of course take this family with me as my housekeepers, only I must not be called a missionary, nor build churches, nor open schools. Well, I am perfectly satisfied to be

called a Christian, and do as I have been doing here to forward the things of the Kingdom.

The female hadji in her sacred white turban called again, to pour out all her worldly troubles, and I should think she sat a good hour with me in the verandah. I little thought that the controlleur, whose house is nearly opposite, saw it all from his verandah, and expressed much astonishment to Mr. Wiebe at the Mohammedans being such good friends with us, as his idea always seems to have been that we shall cause a great rebellion wherever we go. He would have been still more astonished if he could have heard what a straight talk we had, never once diverging to 'small talk.' I read her the story of the rich ruler, and showed her the picture of herself, &c., and she said, 'I go to other people, but they do not give me good words like these.' Poor thing! if she only would take Christ at His word!

April 25.—Yesterday, when our text-book said, 'He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation,' Ps. cvii. 7, we were at last set free to go. Mr. Wiebe had a four hours' talk in the controlleur's house, without coming to a decision, and in the evening they had a two or three hours' talk in Mr. Wiebe's house. It was only on rising to leave that the longed-for and prayed-for 'Yes' was spoken, and then Mr. Wiebe looked in to tell us. We four, Bartimeus, his wife, Esther and I, had just been having a little prayer-meeting together; and so, after Mr. Wiebe had left, we had a little praise-meeting, and then bed and sound sleep.

This morning before breakfast I sent Bartimeus across with a letter of thanks. He was only away a few minutes, but they seem to have talked over everything, and the controlleur was very gracious, only regretting that Malintang is a fever-infested place, but was reassured on hearing that our house stood by the roadside, not in the village.

CHAPTER XII

GREAT MANDAILING

May 3 to July 10, 1896.

'For this . . . I prayed ; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him.'—1 Sam. i. 27.

Malintang, Great Mandailing, May 3, 1896.—Yesterday, through God's unspeakable goodness and incomprehensible loving-kindness, we arrived here in health and safety, having slept three nights on the way and travelled four days. It is quite marvellous how God, quite contrary to our expectations, has brought us to this particular spot, which might well be called the central point of all Mandailing. It is a very superior house, most substantially built, with a zinc roof, and stands, with the little eating-house beside it, quite alone, and on the high-road. Everybody must pass by here who goes through Mandailing, and it will at once be known far and wide that it has become a Christian house.

May 7.—By degrees we are getting our premises into cleanliness and order, and most interesting work it is, especially with such a helper as Esther. As to the people, a band of lads took up their abode outside the house, and for the first few days found much pleasure in howling and singing and beating a drum ; but they seem to have got tired of that now, seeing it failed to annoy us, or else for

a day or two they have found occupation elsewhere. They would dearly have liked to disturb our meetings, if only they could hit upon the right time; but this was difficult, as our meetings are very short, and we keep from singing (except sometimes in a low voice), and so occasionally they began their row just after we had finished.

May 8.—It is the custom in Silindung, on entering a new house, to invite one's friends to eat together and pray together. We had no friends, as we thought, but on the Monday God sent us seven Christian men from Silindung (but unknown to us there), who had come on business to Mandailing, and had not forgotten to bring their book of Scripture portions, and had, I believe, faithfully observed Sunday during their three months' absence. So we invited them all to supper, and had a beautiful meeting, and they all slept in the kitchen. Another morning an intelligent young man, one of Bartimeus' many Mandailing friends, looked in on us, and bought a copy of the Acts, and immediately went into the restaurant, and actually read it aloud there.

We had to employ two or three men to make a drain at the back of this house, which brought seven or eight great lads to our window the next afternoon, probably some of the howling band, who requested work. Bartimeus was just giving us a lesson in the Mandailing dialect, so I asked for a lesson on Matt. v. 11, and we read it over and over, and the lads all stayed, three coming into the room, and all of them were perfectly quiet.

May 10.—Writing, writing, writing! As soon as one letter is off I must begin another. Everything is most interesting in this our new life, in such utter ignorance as we are of what may happen from one day to another. As usual, however, the soft and easy part falls to my share—writing, reading, teaching our own family, and speaking a word in season, as far as I am able, to those who come in at the door, or stand at the window. The lads who howled

and sang and beat their drum during the first three days are quite different now: perhaps the owner of this house has lectured them. We had our Sunday morning service this morning, all dressed in our Sunday best. We put a cover on my favourite bench to hold the books and money box, so it all had quite a festive appearance. We would not shut up the house, so the lads got scent of it; about half a dozen stood at the window, and another half-dozen came inside, but they really behaved extremely well. We let them come and go as they liked, doing nothing either to attract or annoy them, and reading the hymns instead of singing them. The grown-up daughter of our landlord also came in towards the end, which I was particularly glad of.

You will wonder why we do not try to attract the people. This is because we are in rather a peculiar position just now. The Government is always prophesying that the Christians will cause an uproar among the Mohammedans. There is as yet no permission for real missionaries to come here, and most certainly that permission will not be given if any disturbance whatever should occur now, so our only plan is to keep as still as mice. Bartimeus has some unpleasantness to bear in his long talks with the people who lounge about the restaurant. They ask many questions about Christianity, but mostly in a captious spirit, as people who are trying to lay traps for one's feet. I am quite satisfied with our position, and am persuaded that in the course of time the prejudices of the people will be overcome by persistent, quiet, friendly conduct.

Yesterday Esther and the children, accompanied by the landlord's daughter, visited a village. They were not asked in anywhere, and only one woman made up her mind to shake hands; but they did not run away, as in the first village visited, and Esther contrived to nurse a baby or two, and had some friendly talk.

May 12.—I think I may almost say that most days since we have been here we have been brought in contact with people from Silindung, though as yet with no one whom we had known there. They say that more than a hundred men from Silindung have been visiting Mandailing in the last three months, getting what I imagine must be gutta-percha from the trees: they sell it to the Chinamen. When these men, in parties of six or seven, pass through Malintang on their way back, they look in upon us here (at least three such parties have done so), and if they are fairly good specimens of Christianity they have an elder with them, who brings some religious book (they very cautiously bring Old Testament stories), and reads it to the others on Sunday instead of working. What a grand lift up it must be for such men, feebly striving not to deny their faith, to find a Christian house set up in the wilderness! Yesterday, too, a Christian on his way back from Siboga to Pakanten looked in here with his companion, and they became our guests for the night. They had passed through Silindung just at the time of the yearly conference there; had visited the Princess House in Pansur-na-pitu, and spoken with Sister Johannsen; and gave us, of course, the latest news about everybody.

To-day we were suddenly brought into pleasant communion with Maga. After breakfast a little crowd collected at the window, and a superior young man asked where Bartimeus was. Then he began talking about Maga, but would not accept our invitation to come into the house, saying his feet were dirty; so he sat on the edge of the window in most humble style, and only by degrees we found out that he was the nephew and heir of the grand old Sultan of Maga, and was driving home from Siboga in a carriage. I showed him the Scripture portions, and he bought two, as he and the lads with him could read.

One great mistake I made, but perhaps it can be remedied

some day. He said, 'One thing I particularly wish, and that is to learn English.' He said it probably partly out of politeness, but mostly out of ambition, showing at the same time considerable contempt of Batta. I rather laughed at the idea, and said it would be much more profitable to read the good books in his own language, and act in accordance with them. Oh, foolish me! instead of seeing at once that this was God's opportunity for me to gain a hold over him, and enable him to read the *good* things in English, the bad ones being hardly likely to come within his reach. How often have I prayed for this young man, and wondered how we could gain an influence over him, the present sultan being so old that he is hardly likely to take in new ideas.

May 13.—On Sunday afternoon the others went to visit the village where Esther and the children had been the day before, but they were not at all cordially received. A man from that village met with Bartimeus afterwards in the eating-house, and said, 'Do not come too soon to visit us: we are quite friendly, and would gladly receive you, but the hadji is angry, and will not allow it.' Some women also came to us afterwards, and were as friendly as their extremely timid natures allowed; would not come into the house, but stood at the window and smiled, and said they were our friends. Shaking hands is such a very strange and strong method to use that we did not venture upon it. Two women another time stood a long while in the high-road, looking in, and I managed from my bed here to have some friendly talk with them; but I did not venture to get up and go near, for fear of frightening them away.

May 17.—We have begun again to sing without evil effects, and as long as it does not do harm it is likely to do good. Some of the people would like us to sing just for their amusement, but we decline, telling them that singing with us is a sacred thing connected with worship; so the

consequence is they come to the 'worship'—that is, they come and go, not staying generally to the end, and really behave very well.

May 19.—At this present moment God alone knows whether my Esther is a leper or not! With amazing strength of character and courage, she was the first to propound the idea, speaking quite cheerfully about it. I, on the contrary, in utter cowardice, ignore it absolutely, and merely speak about her 'sores.' It is very uncomfortable for her, poor dear thing! but she bears it perfectly, and I hear her sing to herself while lying down.

May 22.—Yesterday we made what I may call a little step in advance, for which I am extremely thankful. So far the 'great people' of this neighbourhood have not called or taken any notice of us; and, of course, every little thing that happens, or does not happen, is a cause of remark, and Christianity will be esteemed or otherwise accordingly. It was even noticed and talked about that the controlleur took off his hat to me the other day, as he drove past! Yesterday two little carriages and pair drove past, and then stopped for something; and Djakualo, our landlord, went out, and after a long talk with the people inside, the result was that the two great ones—the head chiefs of this district—came in accompanied by a most friendly old man, the overseer from Penjabungan, of course all natives and Mohammedans. I had lately bought two chairs to prepare for such events, and there was one belonging to Djakualo, so they were all seated in state, and Bartimeus sat on his favourite stool; and then I had the very great pleasure of explaining (evidently exciting their interest and surprise) that I had come to Mandailing in response to their own request, or the request of their people made forty years ago, and that I was both sorry and ashamed to have kept them so long waiting.

The overseer seemed quite to take in the situation. 'So

you have come all that immense distance, and have given up your home to live in such a house as this' (waving his hand contemptuously over our beautiful room!), 'and the people will not so much as come out of their villages to visit you, or if they stand close to the house, they will not even come in.'

I said of course it must be so in a new work. In Silindung it was very different, but that was the result of thirty years' Christian work. One of the old chiefs then asked if it was a difficult religion, and what one was to do to learn it. I suggested, as the beginning, attentively to read through St. Luke's Gospel; but he did not take the hint and buy the book. I should like to have given them coffee, but Esther was lying down at the end of the room, and Martha was lying down, rather ill, in her own room, watching the two youngest children, who have got the fever, so the coffee plan did not get executed: but that did not much signify, as they understood the reason; and one of the chiefs, who does not at all favour Christianity, was probably glad to escape without being expected to defile himself by eating and drinking with Christians.

May 27.—Esther does not get at all better. Through all this, however, our work goes on beautifully, and I have got quite fond of the lads who come so faithfully to the window and door. This morning many travellers came too, and about twenty men and lads listened to us with perfect quietness and respect. We sang three hymns, talking in between. Such a thing as that never happened to us as long as we were at Sipongi.

May 30.—On the same day as the above, another party of more than twenty people came, almost taking us by storm; some coming in through the window, some through the door, and sitting down, apparently with the fixed idea of being preached to: and you may be sure we carried out their ideas to the full, and one of them bought St. Matthew's

Gospel. 'This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.'

If ever there were a prepared home for prepared servants, it is truly this house, which we are now hiring, but which I have already arranged to buy. This is a noted place for thieves, and the house is like a little fortress, evidently built by the owner for the safe shelter of the many travellers who have slept here for the last four years. There is only one outside door. The windows, with one exception, are made with five upright bars each, through which one can put one's arm but not one's head; and though there are wooden shutters outside I do not feel justified, much as I should like it, in getting rid of these bars, as it is a double security at night, and a great security by day, if half the house should be left empty. Of course none of the windows have any glass.

June 2.—Just before sending off my last letter the happy news reached us that Miss Emily Dutton had arrived in Sipoholon to be Sister Kate's companion. Everything seems very flourishing there.

The other day an elderly well-dressed woman came in from a village three miles off. I only remember once before seeing such a look as I saw in her. It was a kind of worshipping look which half frightened me, and a hungry puzzled look of asking for something which made me feel inclined to cry. Five or six times she said, 'Now I will go,' but seemed as if she could not tear herself away, and three times she took my hand to say good-bye, and on leaving said she would come again. I do hope she *will*, but her husband was standing outside, and he scolded her, so there is no knowing. We are entirely in God's hands in our work, and are unspeakably thankful for it: to those whom He sends here we speak; the others we, or at any rate I, cannot reach.

And now it seems quite an understood thing that my

dear companion Esther is really leprous; though of three kinds of leprosy Bartimeus says this is the mildest form, and that with proper care she may be well in a few months. One of the two new rooms now in building will be for her use till the illness is really over.

This morning during our reading we had a little party of listeners at our window. In the midst came a Christian from Pakanten with a letter from Mr. Nikkel; and before we had closed came the overseer of this district, who stayed a long time and had coffee, with a crowd of gazers and listeners, and he bought Acts, and was scarcely gone before a chief arrived, with his companion, a hadji, and another and larger crowd; and the two sat on chairs and drank coffee, and we had a specially nice talk, and the chief also bought Acts. When they had driven off in their carriage, three or four men stood at the window, so I read them the parable of the fruitless tree; before I had finished a crowd of men came up behind, so I read it again, and then they went off and talked about it at the eating-house. Esther meanwhile was washing outside, instead of in this room, as formerly, and the consequence was that some girls came and made friends with her, which they would not have ventured to do indoors.

This afternoon I was quietly teaching the four children about John the Baptist, when about twenty men assembled, most of them coming in and sitting down. At the close I asked where they came from, and they said they were road-makers employed by Government. 'Well,' I said, 'that is just what John the Baptist was, and what we Christians are.' At last I have been obliged to dismiss them as politely as I could, as Esther could not come in and get to her mat. Yesterday I had a little talk with some soldiers, who must needs pass through Malintang on their way from south to north, so you will see what a centre of life this is.

June 4.—At this moment my efforts to dismiss the constant inflow of men having proved quite vain, I begin to write, as a kind of hint. Bartimeus joined me this morning in speaking to three assemblies of men, or to the same who come again and again, and many times has the question been asked, 'What must I do to become a Christian?' They have no special intention of becoming such, but they are always respectful (except just now in the matter of dispersing), but they will be sure to go as soon as I can say, 'We should like to eat now.' I had to say this before breakfast; but as soon as they saw (from the eating-house) that we had done eating and were assembling for prayers, they all came back again! One of them is, I think, a hadji; and one is certainly a Lobe, who is higher in rank than a hadji—a young man thoughtful and earnest, and with specially respectful manners, thanking me when I had sold him some books. I am getting quite accustomed to living in public, seeing that I have always my little six feet square bedroom to retreat to if I like. So they sit and gaze and smoke, and talk together in a low voice; and at last, finding I have become perfectly dumb, they go away.

June 8.—And now this house is bought for the modest sum of £40. It is against the law for Europeans to buy either houses or land here, so it was done in the name of Bartimeus. Two witnesses were present, one being a friendly Moslem priest, and they all smoked together, which seems to form part of every business transaction. Nobody could write except myself, so I wrote the agreement at Bartimeus' dictation. The money was then counted and handed over, and that was all; and we drank coffee (except the priest), and there was of course the usual crowd of men and lads looking on; no one seemed to think that at all objectionable.

Naturally this strong measure of buying a house has caused much consternation, and I believe it was not a mere coincidence that that very night our 'fortress' was broken

into, and all the available goods in the kitchen carried off. I do not think this had anything to do with the many road-menders, as it was done by experienced thieves. They might have got in the same way long ago. The kitchen, unlike the rest of the house, is made of bamboo, otherwise it would be too hot to bear; and the thieves cut away the bamboo by the side of the bolt, put their hand in, unbolted the window, and so got in. About twenty men had been sleeping that night in the eating-house, and Djakualo would not let any of them go in the morning till Bartimeus had gone in and preached them a little sermon, but naturally did not accuse them of stealing the things. We are taking no notice of the matter, and, like everything else that happens, I believe it will greatly help us. The neighbours themselves say, 'It is not Christians but Mohammedans who have done this thing. As for the Christians, they have done no harm, and we feel very greatly ashamed.'

June 11.—The night before last the thieves tried again, so we believe, attempting an entrance to the kitchen from underneath, as the floor is also of bamboo; but apparently a man knocked his head against the floor, just where an empty oil tin was standing, which caused a clatter, and Bartimeus was up in a moment striking a light.

I believe we are in the midst of a great battle. We are not ourselves fighting, we are simply accepting everything that comes; but the powers of light are fighting against the powers of darkness, and they will certainly prevail. The Holy Spirit is working, but people do not as yet know it is the Spirit. The saying is going about: 'The lady is bewitching the people; they do not want to visit the house, but they are drawn there, and those who go once have to go again.' But whatever happens it is invariably the good Bartimeus who has to bear the brunt of it: everything is rolled on to him, but the Holy Spirit brings him victorious all through.

June 13.—You will be as thankful to hear, as I am to tell, that Esther is distinctly better, and the new room (which is not yet finished) will probably not be used by her at all. They still call her disease leprosy, but perhaps we do not know much about it.

The people here have certainly begun to understand us better, and the women and girls are not nearly so afraid as they used to be. Very many come to look at us and make friends, and several have come in and sat down.

June 18.—Yesterday several things happened. Esther, to our great joy, was pronounced free from leprosy, which she has had for a month and a half. No doubt the constant bathing, and much soap, has made it so short a business compared with others.

Secondly, an old Christian man from Pakanten entered regularly into our service as helper. He and his son arrived providentially here a few days after the kitchen had been robbed, and brought a supply of coffee, which just replaced that which was stolen; and it was helpful to have them and Bartimeus all sleeping together in the kitchen. Indeed, for three nights there has been a fourth, a Christian returning from Toba to Pakanten, but his feet were so bad with walking that we poulticed them, and kept him for a little rest, bringing our family party up to twelve in number.

Thirdly, I discovered that I was quite knocked up, from what I can only call the heavy weight of blessing with which God is blessing us, and so I determined to do nothing extra.

Fourthly, the two new rooms, one on each side of the kitchen, were at last finished, but Esther will not, happily, be banished to one of them. They were finished, not at our time but at the right time, almost to an hour, for—

Fifthly, that very afternoon sixteen Christians arrived

from Silindung, on their way south, so we took them all in for the night. All they required was permission to cook the rice they had brought with them, and we had a most happy increase to our usual sunset meeting. As to our outside friends, the road-menders, who keep coming to us in gangs of about twenty at a time, two sets had already come that morning to listen to 'instruction'; but though they never come in after sunset, the sound of the singing was too much for them, and as we were finishing in came a gang, forming unconsciously a visible parable. We, the twenty-eight Christians, clustered round the hanging lamp, as honoured and accepted guests, the others further away in semi-darkness. It must have been quite a new experience to Mandailing Mohammedans to find themselves in the minority, and those whom they have always despised rejoicing in full possession of the situation; and they said to each other in a kind of awe-struck way, 'Who are those?' 'Oh, those are the Christians!'

I am sure I hope they really *are* Christians! Bartimeus and I spoke to them of the love of God, and of the light which He had given to all who would accept it; and then Bartimeus fetched his harmonica (which caused a buzz of delight among the men) and sang, 'God loves me.' That was a meeting which will have to leave a mark somewhere. It was a full house that night, eight men in each of the new rooms.

About midnight the man with the bad feet, and our old man's son, started off to return to Pakanten, taking advantage of the moonlight. The sixteen others were up early, cooking and eating their breakfast, but we did not let them go without a short hymn and prayer, and the window was full of gazers, to see how the Christians were sent on their way. Since our own breakfast I have been having a delightful time of blissful stillness in my own dear little bedroom. On the walls are 'God First,' 'Kept

by the power of God,' the luminous cross, and 'Whosoever forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be My disciple.'

About one hundred and twenty road-menders are employed in this district now; and I should say, at a guess, that all of these have now visited us, very many coming over and over again, and always respectful.

July 1.—Ever since June 24 we, but especially I, have been retracing with great interest the daily steps of our journey from Sipoholon a year ago, praying specially for the friends in each resting-place as their day comes round. The work here has been continuing, though the road-menders have passed on their way. In the course of nine days about seventy Christians from Silindung and Toba have visited this house in parties of from seven to sixteen, many of them sleeping here, and none of them going without some special word. It seems that twice a year they come in that way and invade Mandailing in search of gutta-percha; and no doubt in less than three months they will all return again in time for the field labour, so I suppose we shall see them here four times a year.

One Sunday fifteen of them had made particular arrangements so as to be here for the morning service, going on their way as soon as it was over; eight more came in for a Sunday evening service and a night's rest. Another set looked in on the Monday morning, to pick up some of the sermon which they had missed the day before. Another set, who slept here on Monday night, had to be sung and prayed with on Tuesday morning by Martha and Esther, as Bartimeus was gone to the early market, and I was in bed, where I have remained more or less for the last week.

Bartimeus and I have both knocked ourselves up, and are in a more or less speechless condition, and we had a quiet little laugh yesterday at the new revelation that God did not yet consider us weak enough to answer His purpose, whereas we thought we were quite weak enough before.

At last the answer to the petition of the Baptists to work in Mandailing has come, and *it has been refused*. This is, of course, entirely the work of the controlleur and resident, as the governor-general can know nothing personally of the circumstances. We have done all we could to secure the help, first of the Lutherans, then of the Baptists: both have failed, so there only remains the Salvation Army, and heartily thankful I shall be if they can come. Meanwhile we must hold the fort, not for 'they are coming,' but for 'He is coming.'

Bartimeus is much pleased to be able to use his harmonica as a substitute for singing, but, as he pathetically adds, 'it is quite useless for preaching'; and every hour almost of every day there are opportunities for preaching, but that good man is far braver than I am, and talks and talks in spite of his poor chest.

July 10.—The 8th was the anniversary of the day we arrived here for one night, little thinking it was to be our home. The day was celebrated by an unexpected visit from the controlleur, who happened to be passing through on business. It was very sudden. I was in bed, and had no time even to put on a jacket; Esther was clearing out my chest of drawers, where she had discovered a lizard living amongst the clothes, and she was herself unable to get out of the room, as they put the chair just in the doorway. It was decidedly comical, and I think both the controlleur and I were more amused than shocked. The object of the visit became apparent from one of his first sentences.

'I have received a letter from Mr. Wiebe about setting up a house in Maga; but have you not yet heard that the Government have forbidden any mission work to be carried on there?'

'Oh yes, I have heard; but this has nothing to do with Mr. Wiebe or Mr. Nikkel: the house is for myself, as I do not wish to be a guest of the sultan each time I go there.'

'Oh, but why will you persist in living here in the midst of fever?'

'I am extremely happy here, the work gets on much better than I expected, and the people are most willing to listen.'

'But they will never become Christians.'

'How *can* they before they know what Christianity is? We must show them that first.'

'H'm! But don't you know that in Sipirok people who were Christians are now becoming Mohammedans?'

'I don't know, but I do know that in Padang Bolak more than five hundred Mohammedans are coming over to Christianity.'

Well, we both laughed, and it is clear to me that I may set up as many houses as I like in Mandailing.

Last Sunday was an interesting day. Before breakfast ten men arrived, horse-dealers returning to Silindung with perhaps fifty horses. So the horses grazed, and the men cooked their rice while we were eating ours, and used our plates and things as soon as we had finished with them. Then they all joined our service, besides perhaps ten Mohammedans, who were listening most of the time. Just in the middle of it the wife of the controlleur with her four children drove by in two carriages, going to meet him on his return from Sidempuan. Everything we do is apparent from the road, so she will have been able to tell her husband that we were not idle nor empty.

In the afternoon they both looked in here with two of the children. I was back in the bedroom by that time, but that did not seem at all to affect their spirits. She kept smiling and standing in the doorway with a heavy child in her arms, but we were rather at a loss for a mutual language. He meantime kept repeating that if there was anything at all that I needed, I must write to him or send Bartimeus. In fact, they were very friendly.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN FAMILY IN MALINTANG

July 14, 1896, *to January* 7, 1897.

'Kept by the power of God.'—1 PETER i. 5.
'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.'—MATT. v. 16.

Malintang, Mandailing. July 14, 1896.—Esther has been having a fierce battle with herself. For about a month she has been unsettled, because her favourite friend in Pea Radja has suddenly married a native pastor, instead of carrying out her professed intention of always continuing as she was, a teacher of children, and she will be leading a very soft life in comparison with Esther's life here. It culminated in her asking to go back to Silindung, to which I at once agreed, saying she must feel herself perfectly free; and I gave her a sheet of paper, to write to her objectionable brother to come and fetch her, but I forbade her to write till she had first prayed and asked for God's opinion in the matter. I kept thinking of the four slender pillars on which the Mandailing Church is now resting, and it seemed as if one of these had turned out rotten. That letter never got written. My spine was unexpectedly worse that day, and in the evening she was penitent and miserable, thinking (as did I) that her dreadful intention was the cause of it. So again a weak body seemed more powerful than a strong one!

July 16.—On June 25, being the anniversary of our leaving Pansur-na-pitu, I wrote to invite Bartimeus' old father to come over and visit his grandson, which he had been longing to do ever since that child was born. He is probably halfway here by this time; but oh, the pathos of it! our beloved Bartimeus has been, and indeed is now, on the borders of the grave, struck down with typhus fever. We all took leave of him yesterday, but at this moment he is still alive. Three days ago (Monday) he was quite laid aside and became delirious, and I prayed that some friend might be sent to us; so on Tuesday our old man and his son turned up from Pakanten, and of course they are staying with us for the present. Yesterday morning (Wednesday) Bartimeus seemed a little better, but in the afternoon he twice sent his farewell to me, so then I felt I must go to him in the distant new room: he seemed to be dying, and could not speak, but gave me his hot hand, and after a few words of peace and 'Hallelujah!' they helped me to come back.

My tears were not dry when six men arrived who had been with us a week or two before, as three of them were ill, and all had to return to Silindung. They occupied the other new room, and made no noise, poor things! and we were glad to have them. Five out of the six men were able to come to our prayers, and again to the reading after supper (Psalm xci); and this morning early they went away, the three strong ones leading their three sick friends on their weary tramp. So our little boat sails on, threatened with shipwreck over and over, but 'kept by the power of God.'

July 18.—Yes, kept and delivered, for Bartimeus has actually recovered. His father arrived yesterday; and he was able to stand, and walk a little, and talk a little. It seems almost too sudden to be wholesome, but God is able to keep off a relapse, and I believe this bitter cup has been

spared us. This is, to my mind, the grandest work I have ever yet been engaged in, and just begun! Well, no doubt He knows we were not able yet to bear such a blow, and so He would not let the work suffer.

The same day that the six men went away there came seven others; of them also three were ill, and one so seriously that they had to stay two nights, and this morning they went away in a bullock-cart. What people did before this house was a refuge for such, I cannot think, as the eating-houses do not receive sick people. Now we have just had our usual Saturday prayer-meeting, or rather, unusually grand praise-meeting, with many Mohammedans present. It is so pretty to see the old father carrying his fat little grandson; such a grand specimen of a child it is; he says none of his other grandchildren come up to it. Seven men altogether have come from Pansur-na-pitu, Martha's brother being one of them, so we are a large party, and she is happy.

July 24.— We are still alive, all of us, indeed, very much alive, and extremely happy concerning the only object for which we have come to Mandailing. It will soon be three months since we came, and I can only call it a time of unbroken joy and success and real deep work, with the inevitable consequence that at last the enemy has arisen in full force; but of this presently.

First about our hadji. He made special friends with Bartimeus, and has been coming every day to the eating-house close by, to be talked to by him about Christianity; but he would never put his foot within this house, till at last he visited Bartimeus in his own back room. The next day he ventured into the large room and drank coffee with Bartimeus; then the same afternoon he planted himself in the passage just before my open bedroom door, and at last I had the pleasure of seeing him, and shaking hands, and thanking him for twice giving us cocoa-nuts. He also brought a fowl and two measures of rice, as a token of

respect to Bartimeus' old father. He has also been overheard to say to Djakualo, 'As to Christianity, it seems to be a very good religion, quite different from what it has been represented to us.'

It got whispered about lately that while in Sipongi we had made a feast, and it was evident that they would like a feast also here; so, to please them, we used the good excuse of the old father's coming, and consented. Bartimeus was far too ill to arrange anything, and it was not necessary. I handed over the same amount of money as at Sipongi, and Djakualo undertook everything. The hadji worked like a slave to help him, and provided all the many necessary mats.

Bartimeus and I were both very unwell the day of the feast (it is my turn to have a touch of fever now), and the very thought of rice and meat was obnoxious to us, but it did not much signify. The fact of the hostess drinking out of a feeding-cup, and addressing the meeting without raising her head from the pillow, does not seem at all incongruous here, whatever it might be in England; and it was simply grand to hear the loud, clear, repeated remarks of assent from Djakualo and the hadji. Possibly there may have been forty people altogether, but many were not in the front room, so I could not count. The only woman was Djakualo's wife, who sat next me. Bartimeus, as in duty bound, had himself to go in the morning to the Upper Malintang village, perhaps a quarter of a mile off, so as personally to invite our own chief, but he had to have a man on each side of him to help, and had to rest several times on the way.

The next day a very powerful sheikh arrived at the eating-house. He is just returned from Mecca, where he has spent three years, and is filled with the glory and wisdom of Arabia. He was extremely angry to hear that we had dared to settle here, and that Djakualo had presumed

to sell us this house. He asked by whose permission we had come, and forbade everybody for the future to come to this house, or have any intercourse with us; and wherever a sheikh comes, everybody, even the chiefs, bow before him. The moment he was gone the brave hadji disobeyed orders, and came in straight to Bartimeus, telling him all, and adding, 'Now do not you be afraid. Do not go away. It will come right somehow.'

That feast was a wonderful close to the first stage of our work. Our closing words were: 'You have believed many untruths about Christianity; this has not been your fault, but ours, for not coming sooner; but for the future, please come direct to us if you want anything explained, as we can give correct information.' The farewell hand-shaking with the hadji was a fervent clasp; it seemed as if we could not easily part. Then the very next day came the spreader of the untrue things.

July 28.—For two days it was very dead and quiet, except in this house, and we had work enough with Christians coming and going. The others did not keep quite away, but were frightened, and preferred the dusk and the back of the house. There they came in ones and twos to speak friendly words to Bartimeus. On Sunday morning, during our service, a drum began outside, not loud, but it seemed as if it might be the beginning of trouble. So Bartimeus went out and begged them to stop, which they immediately did, and more than a dozen men and lads at once came to the windows and door, and remained there to the end of the service, perfectly silent. This was a great triumph. After dinner it was the same, and now they seem to come again about the same as ever.

Aug. 4.—To-day the eighteen days' visit from our Pan-sur-na-pitu friends is over, and it is marvellous how God has brought us through the deep waters of sickness, so that exactly on the prearranged day they are all well, and so

are we, who are left behind. From July 22, the day of the feast, till yesterday, it has been nothing but illness. Angelica delirious with fever in one room; in the next room one of the men desperately ill with heart or liver. For days and days he continued to groan and cry aloud, in the most heart-rending way, and twice the others went nine miles to get medicine from the doctor for him, and we sent a message to his friends in Pansur-na-pitu to come over and fetch him away (they will no doubt meet on the road), and when he seemed to be better there came a relapse, and the whole thing began again. I had fever for a week or more; two of the other men had a slight attack of fever; Bartimeus, besides having constant relapses, had one dreadful sudden attack of such pain that he had to cry aloud; and the dear hadji wept for sorrow.

Through it all the Silindung men kept coming and going, and one day twenty-nine men came to cook and sleep here! More than forty slept in this house that night, but they were so quiet, those good men, that one could hardly tell there was any one there. Just that particular night was one of perfect stillness and rest! and what a beautiful large meeting we had that evening, and I was able to go in and speak to them, and Bartimeus was able to meet with them next morning before they went away.

All through, the singing never ceased, at least four times a day; and the hadji was constantly hovering about, and insisted on daily supplying the old father with that dreadful betel stuff to chew, no doubt to his great satisfaction. It was beautiful that the old man himself was perfectly well all the way through. I was quite afraid of keeping them longer, for fear he too should fall ill as a climax. Early this morning, almost before dawn, there was a quiet little farewell gathering, and Bartimeus was just strong enough to play his harmonica again, though feebly, and with the others to accompany the return party

a quarter of a mile along the road, where they sang again and parted. Finally the hadji arrived breathless, and had to run after the travellers to secure his farewell.

Aug. 5.—For a month and a half, I have been almost entirely in my room, first spine, then fever, then caution, and only once eat with the others, i. e. the last meal, the evening before they left. Even poor little Angelica was able to be present then, poor little self-willed eight-year-old child, constantly increasing her illness by disobeying orders. But almost every day I was able to go twice into the large room to take the reading. Now I am gradually but steadily emerging again.

I have handed over the education of my two little darlings, Stacey and Priscilla, to Esther. For about a year, at their own request, they have been coming to me every evening for a little so-called teaching. Now they are having real teaching from Esther, and enjoy it much; spelling, writing, singing, learning, and sometimes next morning they repeat to me what they have learnt, or show me what they have written.

Aug. 6.—There were rats at Pansur-na-pitu and Sipoholon and Sipongi, but only here in Malintang have they ventured into my bedroom. Their favourite haunt is just over my head, and as the ceiling only consists of bamboo loosely nailed across, we have lined the ceiling just over the bed with strong dark print. That, however, was not enough, so we fastened an ever open Chinese umbrella to the rafters over my head, and that answers perfectly, as far as fears from above are concerned. But they come in at night, and have three times bitten through the string across the window on which the curtain hangs, and which almost touches my bed on the left, so now we always take the string down at night.

One night there was an indescribable scrimmage; by some miracle a rat seems to have got on the top of the

paper umbrella. Naturally, he could not keep his footing, and fell with a great flop into the bath, and I earnestly hoped he would sink and die. Far from it—he splashed and flopped and scrimmaged, till at last he escaped out into the darkness. But oh, how I thank those rats from the bottom of my heart, that they never, as far as I know, crawl over me; and as long as they keep clear of the bed I am satisfied.

Aug. 8.—The other day there was a little impromptu meeting of three or four hadjis, sitting on the bench by the eating-house with Bartimeus talking to them. Of course our friend was one, then his bosom friend and one or two others; and all were of one accord in their approval of Christianity. I know quite well that Mohammedans will go almost any length as far as words are concerned, even saying, 'You are right and we are wrong,' and yet never have the courage of their faith to step out from darkness to light. We leave them quite free, and can only pray for the Holy Spirit Himself to work in their hearts.

Aug. 18.—I think I can say that the three and a half months since we have been here have been the happiest time in my life.

Bartimeus and his second daughter, Angelica, have been having such constant relapses of fever, that they went off yesterday with a companion for a month's change to Maga, where the climate is as cool as Silindung, and where they will receive a hearty welcome, and find plenty of work. I told you there was an old Christian man in Mr. Nikkel's district in Pakanten, who, with his son, have as it were half entered into our service. Now the old man is with us, and his son with Bartimeus, and I hope and think the arrangement will hold good till Bartimeus returns.

It is such extremely interesting work to force, as it were, the Mohammedans to speak well and think well of Christianity, and to respect it. Our chief difficulty is to

know how to help the poor. They themselves are utterly wanting in loving-kindness to the miserable and the sick, and they often oppose our helping them; but God has come most wonderfully to our rescue in this matter, through the multitude of Christian men from Silindung, who are constantly passing and repassing Malintang. They are not well received in the eating-houses, as they cook their own food, and are therefore very profitless customers, and the Moslems are much surprised that we are willing to receive these friendless strangers on their way to or from their work in the forest, and that we care for those of them who are ill.

Djakualo's daughter is a specimen of the way the sick are treated here. After marrying, her husband became ill of an incurable disease, so she at once deserted him, and now after two years' illness he has lately died. This I tell you, in case any should say, 'Why should you waste your time meddling with the lives of those good kind Moslems?' With God's help I will never cease to meddle till they shall learn the constraining love of Jesus, and treat the sick and poor as they would wish to treat Himself!

Aug. 20.—It was so funny when first we came to Mandailing, people called me the lady clergyman. Of course I stopped that at once. Bartimeus says they are now calling me the lady sheikh! I suppose a sheikh with them is something like a bishop with us, so the first title after all was the more modest!

Aug. 27.—I think you ought to know that my spine is getting steadily worse, and it may soon become extremely difficult to write; but the work gets steadily better. God is greatly using Bartimeus.

Sept. 3.—I am most thankful to be ill here with my dear family. Bartimeus returned after nine days—well for the time. Kulipa's wife sent me a cake; I took it in my hands, not realizing the weight; but it was too heavy, and brought

on another spasm in the spine—total collapse. They thought I was going to die that night, but I am here still, gradually recovering; and I dare say by the time Bartimeus is ill again I may be able to creep into the large room and take his place, but for a week I have not put my foot to the ground for a moment.

Esther is an angel of mercy, and keeps me so very clean and fresh and nice; God bless her! It just shows what a native woman can be and do when she is trusted, instead of always thrusting a white person in between. She sleeps now just outside my door, and was twice tied with string to my bed, so that I could pull if I wanted her. Truly I have all and abound, even a delightful water cushion.

Sept. 12.—Now what has been hanging over us for a year has happened. Esther's dreadful brother, with three like-minded companions, arrived to take her back to Silindung, and *of course she must go.* Dear Esther is very unhappy, and yet I know half her heart is always in Silindung, specially since the marriage of Regina and Martha, who both professed, like Esther, never to wish to marry. So these four men are our guests! They came on Thursday, the 10th, and will leave I think on Monday, the 14th. Nevertheless our nutshell of a boat sails on over the deep waters, still 'kept by the power of God.' As for me, I have tried Phil. iv. 4–7, and proved it true and beautiful.

Sept. 17.—The men began at once by using bad language, which was very unnecessary, seeing we received them with the same hospitality as the other relatives from Pansur-na-pitu. Mrs. Bartimeus behaved beautifully, made coffee without being told, and sent over to the eating-house for some good things to eat with it. Being still in my bedroom, Bartimeus as usual had the whole burden on his shoulders. One felt on the brink of a precipice all the four days they were here, and no doubt the slightest opposition would have produced some disgraceful scene, but

I am most thankful to say nothing dreadful happened. They loafed about, spying out everything, and meddling with other people's things, and taking care not to help us by doing any stroke of work. My chief difficulty was with poor Esther, that she might not say I was sending her away, and yet impressing upon her that she must go, and go willingly, or they might drag her out of the house, and cause a dreadful scandal.

On the Saturday, Paga, Esther's brother, came to my room and said, 'We are thinking of leaving here on Monday.' 'All right; so as not to travel on Sunday.' Then he added, 'With Esther.' I said that was entirely his own affair; as to Esther she was perfectly free either to go or to stay. So he ventured a step further. 'But the provision for the journey?' I said, 'It is quite out of place for you to ask about that; we know what is proper on such occasions, without being reminded'; and he retired.

On Sunday Esther kept asking me for money (urged on by him, no doubt), but I would only give her what was amply sufficient for the journey for five people, and she had about four shillings of her own besides, all of which would of course go to Paga. That man is actually penniless, and deeply in debt, simply because he and his wife, both strong people with no children, are too idle and too proud to work. His object is to sell Esther in marriage; but even if he does, I fancy all the money will have to go to pay his debts.

But I must tell you the beautiful side of this dark picture —God's side. He sent us, on that same Thursday, a man, his wife and little boy, from Pakanten, begging a few days' hospitality on their way to Sidempuan the following Monday. Could any provision be more beautiful than a woman and a child as companions during the first two days of their journey? We urged them to start before it was light, and (miracle of love) that start was outwardly

as beautiful as if we had all been Christian brothers and sisters. In perfect stillness the eight travellers assembled just outside my bedroom, Esther alone being inside, and I was given a perfectly steady voice to read a few words and pray, and lead in singing a most lovely verse: 'If the Lord is with me, when I start with others to a distant land, I have peace within me, knowing He is close at hand.' Then they all came and shook hands, and then for a minute I was left alone with Esther for our farewell. She was very good and quiet, only crying a little, whereas I reserved my own flood of tears till after they were gone. That good Bartimeus went with them five miles, to secure a passport from the overseer; otherwise four men and a weeping girl might have caused unpleasant inquiries.

I shall have no more anxiety about Esther as soon as she gets home. She will be under the wing of the good teacher Nahor, who has been more than a father to her, and she will have countless other good kind friends. As for us, we are a little family of eight, and feel just as safe and peaceful as the eight in Noah's ark. Mrs. Bartimeus is fully as clean and efficient in doing whatever is necessary for me as Esther, and we are all very happy. People may say it is unfeeling and unkind to be happy under the circumstances, but what am I to do? He who has told us to rejoice always, has put gladness in my heart, and neither people nor circumstances are able to take it away.

Sept. 20.—And yet Esther loves this miserable brother! What a lesson for me! And we have so often prayed for his conversion that I cannot but think this may be the beginning of the answer.

It is quite beautiful to see how the Spirit of God is working here in Mandailing. The chief of Upper Malintang has been opposed to us from the beginning, and has tried to aggravate us by little annoyances. Now, for no apparent reason, he has become quite amiable, and, wonder of wonders,

he actually came the other day to pay me a friendly visit in my bedroom. The hadji of Lower Malintang has for the last two years been opposed to Bartimeus, ever since he first explored this land. The other day, as Bartimeus was sitting on a bench nursing the baby, this hadji sat by his side, quite softened, and talked with him for the first time in a most friendly way. However, never, never shall we be satisfied with their friendliness to the servants, unless it leads them to enter the service of the Master. Some people on their way to market, last Sunday, stopped to listen to the service. About 7.30 p.m., at evening prayers, seven of these people, on their way back from market, came right into the house to hear some more. This was a great step.

Sept. 21.—Such a pretty view I have here from my bedroom window; it is my daily morning joy when the shutters are opened. A tall feathery bamboo, reaching far up into the sky, glittering like silver in the morning, shining like gold at sunset; then, if I rear myself up, a lovely peep through the palms at a distant rice field, and to the left over the ferns a little piece of the road to Silindung. How often, looking at that road, have I said to myself, 'Will help come to us from the north?' but I always answer myself: 'No, I think it will be sent us from the south.' The Barmen Mission lies north, the Salvation Army south, in Java.

Sept. 22.—A great pleasure we have all had. That true brother and dear good friend Mr. Nikkel has actually come and paid us a visit twenty-two hours long, and is now gone again! When he heard of the big case, containing the wheel-bed which had been sent to me from England, he actually wrote to say he must come himself and open the case, and put the thing together, and he has done it too, coming the fifty-four miles from Pakanten.

I think what also urged him on was our supposed forlorn condition, without Esther, and he was a good deal surprised

to find us all serene and as well as usual. The evening before last, just as we had begun supper, he arrived. There was plenty of time all through the visit for some long, quiet talks in this room. It is a beautiful wheel-bed, and I believe will answer its purpose.

Sept. 28.—The three Pakanten people returned last night from Sidempuan, but did not give a very happy account of Esther. She had fever, and spent four days on the road where we thought she would spend only two; but it seems to have been only the mild fever, which comes on alternate days, and having to rest every other day will at any rate have been a great saving to her feet on the long tramp.

Oct. 4.—So sorry to have to give up two or three daily readings which were specially helpful, and such little light books too, and good print; but my right eye, weak for years, has naturally got weaker now with over-reading and writing, and begins to rebel at every kind of work. Perhaps it thinks I ought to be up, like other users of eyes, visiting and talking, instead of always reading. Much it knows!

Oct. 14.—We are now in the midst of a most difficult problem, namely, how this house should be protected, and its Christian character maintained when we go to spend six months in Maga. We are handing it over to a man whom we have only known a fortnight, but we believe he has been sent to us of God. He fell in with Bartimeus on their way from market. It seems he is a good carpenter, but said he would rather work for us at fifty cents per day than elsewhere for seventy, because of the teaching that accompanied it; various things made us believe he was an honest, true man—his friends were good people whom we already knew, such as our dear hadji.

Then Djakualo, the former owner of the house, both fears and dislikes him. It is sad that this should be a recommendation, but, alas! he seems to dislike every one who has

an inclination towards Christianity, and to try and keep them away. He is a most miserable man without knowing it; for instance, Martha has seen him creep round this house after dark and steal our firewood, so it is clear we must have a man here, who will not let himself be trifled with. The upshot was that a few days later I engaged our new carpenter, Djaondolan by name, as 'steward,' with a salary equivalent to his former carpenter's wages, on an average; his duties being those of a general helper, to be with us all day as long as we are here, and to live in the house with his wife and two little ones as soon as we are gone; but to diminish his responsibility we mean to shut up all the front of the house. I also made a mental determination to say no more to him at present about Christianity, as I will have nothing to do with what even savours of 'buying converts.' But now (Bartimeus reports to me) he is openly saying he does not mean to be one with us in work without being one with us in faith! God grant it! but He must bring it about.

Oct. 15.—Some time ago we had the great joy of receiving good news from Esther. I had a letter from her and Sisters Kate and Emily. It is evident she was not at all over-tired; the fever only lasted the first two or three days. A woman companion was found for her from Sidempuan to Sipirok, and the last two days were in very easy stages, as Paga and one of the men were ill. They met with the greatest kindness at all the stations and were freely entertained, and as soon as they reached Sipoholon, ten nights on the road, she was off to the Princess House to see Sister Kate, and dined with them.

Oct. 23.—It really seems now as if everybody, except Djakualo, was our friend here in Malintang, and many little presents have the people brought, some out of gratitude for temporal gifts, but others where nothing temporal was given. They have brought eggs, palm-wine, young

cocoa-nuts, hand-bags, reeds to make matting, &c., besides countless little things for the children. We are also very happy in our new steward, Djaondolan, and the fact of our engaging a man who seems to be universally respected has I think drawn other friends closer. It is really wonderful to reflect on God's marvellous protection and guidance, saving us in our utter ignorance and weakness from making fatal mistakes; and in these six months that we have been far from the protection of the kind missionaries, I am constantly thinking like David, 'It is better to fall into the hands of God, than into the hands of men.'

Nov. 9.—We have no doubt now that it was Djakualo who stole all the things out of the kitchen when we first came, though we do not speak openly about it, as it is almost too painful a subject. He professed much sympathy at the time, and at once threw the blame on our favourite workman, saying he was a well-known thief, and had taken lessons in a thieves' school. All this helps us, but it very much injures him, and we have certainly this sign of life here—there are people who hate us; we are not treated with indifference. The chief priest in Upper Malintang came just lately to Bartimeus, and said, 'I have been thinking what I can do to honour you when you go to Maga, and this is the only thing I can think of: I should like to send my son with you, as I am sure at the first there must be many things when help will be needed.' His land adjoins ours, and he is constantly helping us in many ways, but he, like our hadji, is rich, and we cannot do anything in return. I think both of them are equally holy and humble men. . . .

Nov. 27.—Sisters Kate and Emily are very happy in their work at Sipoholon, and it is evidently all alive there. I was so very glad to hear it. To hear of that and of the old Princess House in London both flourishing, is an immense cause for thankfulness.

You have not heard about our newest member. I wrote to Mr. Strötker of Sipirok, to ask for an elderly evangelist to be Ondolan's companion when we left, and he sent me instead a very young certificated teacher, Seman, whereas we are not looking out for either a teacher or scholars. However, Seman seems to be such a simple, earnest, willing helper, consenting to any kind of work instead of school keeping, that we mean to try him, and they are building a tiny house for his wife and three children at the back of this house, and he hopes at Christmas to go and fetch them. We have had some talks together. He said once, 'If lads should wish to come and learn to read, am I to refuse them?' 'No,' I said; 'but let the chief part of your teaching be distinctly Christian, and if they don't care for Christian teaching they will soon leave you again. To hear of forty ordinary scholars would give me no pleasure, but it would be a real joy if one quiet youth, like the son of the high priest, came and learned from you to read God's Word.'

And exactly that is coming to pass! The high priest himself has already made great friends with Seman, and promises to be a father to him when we are gone, for which I am deeply grateful, as my heart rather bleeds at leaving so young a man quite alone among Mohammedans; and the son has already said he would like to learn after they are settled in the new little house, and to-day he must needs come and give a friendly helping hand in the building, and the high priest himself has been asking Seman questions about the Christian faith. Certainly we are not dead here, nor even asleep.

Dec. 1.—Just had a visit from one of the high priest's wives, the most friendly I have yet had here from a woman. She shook hands and sat down without fear or fuss, ate bananas with me, and when I began to speak of Jesus, instead of looking vague and careless, she at once became

attentive, and listened intelligently to two verses of a hymn which I sang, while others would have begun to talk in the middle.

On Sunday night, too, a thing of a different kind happened. We had all retired for the night, the 'retiring' place for the three eldest girls being the large room, and they like to lie under the big table, in the delusion that it protects them from the rats! But this time, to my amazement, instead of going to bed, I heard them start a prayer-meeting on their own account. Stacey, who is only seven years old, prayed three times, the others two or three times, and it lasted quite a long while. I had no idea that little Stacey could pray extempore, much less that she would dream of doing so voluntarily, and on questioning Hinsa next day, I heard she had had to pray three times, as people cropped up in her memory in between for whom she wanted to pray. The particular joy to me was that too often I have heard quarrelling, snappish words between Hinsa and Angelica on going to bed, as they find it very difficult to get on together, so this came like a lovely revival.

Dec. 3.—Sister Thora has had some printing done for me, and most beautifully done too, i.e. one thousand booklets on 'Christian Instruction.' I did it in the form of ten questions and answers, the answers all backed up by New Testament references, and of course in the Mandailing dialect. The time is not yet come to use them, but it will come certainly.

Dec. 8.—Among the many names of Christ of which we are reminded at Christmas 'Wonderful' seems one of the most appropriate. 'What a wonderful Saviour is Jesus!' and I have perpetually to exclaim, 'Wonderful!' Partimeus is now back from Maga, where he went for a few days. The house is practically finished, so that (D.V.) we can leave here on the 18th, and the chief carpenter and teacher

is to come here on Friday to alter my wheel-bed in preparation for the move. The old sultan at Maga, as well as his nephew and heir Dimara, have been so conspicuously kind as to draw down the wrath of their relatives, who say, 'What foolish thing are you doing in receiving these Christians?' Then Dimara turns upon them and says, 'Do you suppose we shall all become beasts if we become Christians? The Government officials are Christians, and we obey them; why should we not also obey these? You had better believe in the Lord Jesus, for if you do not you will not go to heaven. I know this is true, for I read it in a book, and if He is not the Son of God I should like any of you to tell me who in all the wide world was His Father!' This from a Mohammedan —wonderful! Our neighbour the high priest, too, is no longer content merely to send his son with us to Maga, but he hopes to come himself—wonderful!

Maga, Dec. 20.—About noon yesterday we arrived here after a most delightful journey. The four-wheeler proved a most complete success. Am already much stronger than in Malintang.

Dec. 22.—It seems to me sometimes as if I must be the only weak and helpless child that the great Father has undertaken to look after, by the marvellous, thoughtful loving-kindness that He never fails to show! Just a week to-day I was trying the wheel-bed in Malintang to perhaps a distance of twenty yards, over the stones and over the rough bridge; and though I returned, strange to say, without injury, it was an exhausting business. The following Friday, the 18th, we started about 4.30 a.m. The buffalo-wagon, with the luggage, was still before the house, and, of course, Martha and the children had not mounted their car, as they would go like the wind compared with us. The four men with the bed carried me over the stones and the bridge,

so as to avoid the only known evil, and then the other two, nice, steady, middle-aged men, started off with me and the four-wheeler, Bartimeus following; but we rushed along at such a pace that he could not keep up, and after four miles like that by starlight, we had to wait a long time for the others to get up to us.

The revelation of those four miles I shall never forget as long as I live. The delicious, indescribable fresh air, seeming to give new strength every moment; the incomprehensible comfort of body, though there were other bridges and other stones; the new and exquisite delight of seeing the stars spread out before and above us, with no dreadful cover to obstruct the view from one who had not seen one star for months, nor the whole heavens for perhaps six years: and I was glad I remembered by heart the nineteenth Psalm, taught by my mother. By my side lay a strange companion, which had been haunting me for weeks and weeks, namely, my last will and testament, which I fervently hope will really be the last, as it required two Europeans, one an official, to witness my signature, and naturally such people continue steadily not to turn up. So at Penjabungan we stopped at the controlleur's. He insisted on the whole concern being hoisted into the house, and Mrs. Helfrich gave me a cup of chocolate, while he and his European assistant witnessed the signature.

Only two miles more, eleven in all, brought us to Aek Galoga, where we have a little bamboo house of our own, consisting of one large room, large enough for all the family, wheel-bed included, and a little room as well. The eating-house man, who built it, is our friend Kulipa, who is always very glad to see us, though perhaps from very mixed motives.

That night we felt a slight shock of earthquake, the first in the eighteen months since we left Silindung, though this

was one of the first weapons of the enemy — that in going to Mandailing we were going to the land of earthquakes, Maga being the head centre of them.

Next day we started about 5.30 a.m., and, after a beautiful fourteen miles' journey, arrived here by noon, Dimara coming out to meet us, and join us in entering into this beautiful house. I may well call it so, from its being so beautifully adapted to the work that lies before it, and it is also beautifully built, the planks smelling like cedarwood, and much the same colour too. It has a very high-pitched, thatched roof, prolonged in front, as a shade from the eastern sun. To the right of the front door is the window of the guest-room, and to the left another like it, and to the left again a delightful large window open down to the floor, like the one at Malintang. This is just opposite my bed, and brings me into contact with all the outside world, and it is not too high from the ground to prevent people sitting on the floor of this room with their feet outside. So ended our dreaded journey, with not so much as one throb in my spine, and only most happy, thankful recollections all the way along, and I insist on calling it a miracle.

Dec. 29. — On Christmas Day we had two services amongst ourselves, and as there is a poor widow with five children living close by, we had the children in afterwards. They were pleased to eat some biscuits, but most of them would not even taste our lemonade, being only accustomed to drink water. So here we are established, the possessors of two houses in Mandailing; rather quick work in less than eight months. Our Mohammedan steward is taking care of the other one, but I am extremely sorry that at this moment he is without the Christian companion, Seman, that I had provided for him, as he is gone to fetch his wife and children from Sipirok. Bartimeus will have to go over there the very first day he can be spared, to see how things are getting on, and stay till Seman's return, but he cannot

go till after the feast which we hope to give to our Maga friends.

The great question of setting this Mandailing Mission on a permanent footing has now to be faced. I am getting more and more hopeful that the Salvation Army will really take it up. Mr. Herbert Booth, whose head quarters are in Australia, and whose wife is Dutch, is responsible for all the Dutch colonies, of which this is one. Another great point in our favour is that the Sultan of Maga, as well as his heir, have shown themselves greatly pleased both with us and with Christianity. We must not, however, run away with the notion that this dear, kind old sultan is the greatest man in Mandailing, as I find this is by no means the case. He is the oldest, and therefore the most highly respected, and the only one who has received a Government Star of Honour for his many years of faithful service. He has large coffee plantations, and this is of course a great advantage to the Government, as they make coffee a monoply. His heir, Dimara, who received us so courteously, is very fond of everything European, learned and civilized, and this may be the secret of his bias in favour of Christianity, in which case he has very much to unlearn. We have got now a young Mohammedan servant who rejoices in the funny but appropriate name of Poor Miskin. His chief work will be to act as Bartimeus' guide and helper wherever he goes.

Jan. 7, 1897.—On New Year's Eve we had a little meeting, the happiest to me that I have had for many years. We were only three, Bartimeus, Martha and I, and it could not be called a midnight service, as we closed early; but I had the pleasure of going over with them, in thanksgiving and prayer, with help of notes in my almanac for 1896, some special blessings and deliverances in all the twelve months successively, and they were all common blessings which the other two understood as well

as I did. The other part they could only share in out of sympathy, which, however, does not fail, i.e. that of bringing some of my English friends and relatives one by one by name before God, for Him who alone could know the special need, to give that which would supply it. It was a new kind of meeting to Bartimeus and Martha, but I think they quite appreciated it.

The feast yesterday was an immense success, and gave us the opportunity of clearly explaining before all the chief people in Maga the object of our coming, though only, alas! the great people entered this house, as all was under the direction of the sultan, and carried out according to their etiquette; so the others and the women, who are all considered small, ate in other houses.

He himself was here from first to last, and two of his nephews, and the Government overseer, and nine of the principal chiefs from the villages of his dominion. I know, however, that there was another party who kept aloof, i.e. a great hadji, brother of the sultan (they say there are forty hadjis in Maga), a sheikh, and the overseer of the market. I gave Bartimeus forty-five rupees beforehand, expecting we should be about fifty people; to-day he tells me we were about one hundred and twenty people, but the bill only reached forty-eight and a half rupees (£4). The sultan himself helped, I know, in supplying that horrid betel stuff and tobacco, &c., &c. I hope I may never have to give such another feast here, though for this one I am very thankful.

CHAPTER XIV

'THANKFUL TO STAY, BUT DELIGHTED TO GO'

January 7 to May 12, 1897.

'But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'—1 Cor. xv. 57. 58.

Maga, Jan. 7, 1897.—. . . My last and newest disease is dropsy! I have never really quite shaken off the intermittent fever all this time, so every other day I am very thirsty, and drinking, at any rate water, produces dropsy. Of this I had been warned, so I was, as I thought, extremely moderate. However, dropsy has appeared in my feet, and mounted a little to my legs. . . .

Just now I may be said to be the victim of five different diseases: the original spine, fever of long standing but very mild, dysentery, dropsy, and a sore-throat cold, and it is not easy for me to accommodate myself to their opposing needs! but God is good, and brings me triumphantly through, so that none of my usual work need be omitted; and the dropsy must be a little better, as to-day I do not need nine folds of blankets to keep my feet warm till noon—one fold is quite enough. Spine is, however, getting on finely through it all.

Jan. 8.—Yesterday, after my letter was finished and closed, came all your Christmas letters and cards, for

which many thanks. Now I must tell you about our feast, as it was to me a perfectly new experience, quite different from the one at Malintang. I felt obliged to give it, much as I loathed the thoughts of it. The old sultan here, and his nephew, Dimara, have shown us such unbounded kindness, and given us such untold help, that some return must be made, and I think no other return would have been possible or have been accepted by him. Everything had to be done according to fashion, and Dimara undertook the whole responsibility, he and his wife, and sister and daughter, working like slaves from first to last.

All the crockery and glass and trays, and stands for trays, &c., for the use of the sultan and the greater swells, came from his own mansion; our own modest cups and plates hid their diminished heads, and were used only by ourselves. The crockery for the others, perhaps eighty or ninety people whom I never saw, as they did not even enter this house, came from the merchant in the village market, about 100 yards off—one would naturally say hired, but this being a place of absolute monarchy, the sultan simply ordered their use, and all we had to pay was for the single plate that was broken; and the cooking almost all took place in other houses, Dimara's for one.

I never saw Bartimeus so humble as on this occasion; it was very beautiful. He put forward our good 'grandfather' Musa (who is really our servant) as his representative inside the room, dressed up in his Christmas clothes, while he himself served outside; and this was no offence to the guests in a land where white hairs are respected, and being from the south he perfectly knew all the forms to be observed, of which even Bartimeus had to confess himself ignorant.

As the arrangements were being made, it became clear that it would be an immense relief if I would consent to

eat in my own room, though I could have the door open as much as I liked. Nothing could have pleased me better, as I was feeling ill at the time, only it was made clear to them that I should come in after dinner, to conduct the meeting for which my soul longed. To this they quite agreed.

All the floor, except by the back door, was covered with matting, and over this, along the three walls, were spread our best white mats bound with scarlet. As all the guests sit on these with their backs to the wall, the food is on the mats before them, and the centre is left for serving; for the sultan's use his own mattress was brought in addition. At perhaps 10 a.m. they began to arrive, most of them chiefs, and the first few were brought in to me and introduced. Musa went round very nearly on his hands and knees, presenting them with the obnoxious red betel for chewing, and then we had coffee, accompanied by a kind of ginger-bread which was nice, and a kind of rice cake which was the other thing. After this there was a general lighting of cigarettes, and soon, to my surprise, they gradually dispersed, to wander outside, and Musa swept the room. I should think it must have been nearly 1 p.m. before they were all assembled again, the room quite full, and then they requested Bartimeus to play his harmonica, which he did after hunting up the children to form a choir, just by the back door, and two hymns were heartily sung.

I thought, 'After all this we shall at last surely dine,' but to my extreme surprise they all wandered off again, this time to bathe and worship; so Musa swept the room, while I enjoyed a quiet first dinner of soup. In the course of time they returned, and we really dined; but first I said grace, which always means with us a real prayer, and I had both my doors open, so that all could hear, and after dinner Bartimeus returned thanks. The round dinner-trays for the chiefs were covered with a large banana leaf; for

the sultan, his coffee-tray was covered with a white napkin, and his dinner-tray with a beautiful yellow cloth.

When all this was over, I went over to the day bed and poured out my soul, first reading Luke xiv. 12–14, like a sword piercing my own breast; but I explained that this was at least not for a return, but as a return—that we were merely servants, and that our religion forbade us to 'receive honour one of another.'

The great point with the Moslems is that they follow the last *nabi* (prophet or preacher); Nabi Adam is their first, then through the patriarchs to Nabi Issa (Jesus), and finally Nabi Mahomet. So I said, 'Our sole object in coming here is to exalt the Name of the *last* Nabi. Now, who is the last? Your own Koran gives the answer! It is there written that Nabi Issa shall appear again at the end of the world. Now who is the last but He who comes at the end, and who said Himself, "I am the first and the last?"' &c., &c.

And this was on Jan. 6, the Epiphany, the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. After singing a solo, it came to Bartimeus' turn, but I was disappointed in him and in Musa, as theirs were mostly mere speeches of thanks, while I felt that such an opportunity for explaining Christianity to people of influence might never be given us again. The closing verse of a hymn followed, and then Bartimeus made his one mistake, by saying it was now over and getting late, and the guests would no doubt wish to be going; but the old autocrat laughed, and said, 'It may be the end for you; but as for us, we remain till we have finished, and we will now have our evening worship.' This was most interesting, like a short Litany. One man chanted softly and musically, and at frequent intervals they all responded 'Amen,' equally softly. All the men folded their hands reverently, and raised them to a level with their lips. At the close they dropped their hands on their knees, all being

seated, and remained silent a few moments, then unclasped them, and it was over. I believe the Litany was in Arabic, but being so low and indistinct it might be any language. I believe, however, that the men themselves understood the words.

In thinking of the sultan in Turkey, it seems absurd to call this old man by the same name, seeing his kingdom is perhaps nine miles long, as it were a country squire's estate in England, and yet with almost the etiquette of a court. One thing, however, gave me special pleasure. In spite of forms, Bartimeus and Musa managed to secure a large piece of meat for us to give to the poor widow with five children, who lives close by.

Jan. 14.—I am much stronger than in Malintang, and can conduct all necessary meetings and services, and good Brother Nikkel is only about thirty-four instead of fifty-four miles off.

By day, my own work is what I myself consider delightful. I lie in the general room on the day bed just opposite the big window, waiting (but not idly) to see what work the Lord will send me, and He has sent me much, most of it through the window. The other morning it was particularly interesting. Some men began to gather there—road-menders—and then a great man, wearing shoes, was ushered in through the door, shook hands, and sat on the chair, which we have got on purpose for such. I soon gathered that he was the head chief in Tanabatu, superintending his men in their work, so I spoke of the other kind of road-making on which we ourselves were employed. He was interested, brought himself and his chair out of the corner, so that we might be face to face and close, accepted gratefully the little booklet on Christian teaching which I have had printed, and asked questions about it. Coffee and bananas were brought, without my having to ask Martha for them, and we ate together from my little stool, without fuss or

delay. He had such nice eyes, and seemed so different from most others.

Now I am most anxious to build a leper home on a small scale, near the volcanic springs, which I believe are in his dominion, for many reasons an extremely difficult work to accomplish, but if the head chief with his despotic power is on my side, half the battle will be won.

Jan. 24, 1897.—This is certainly a desperately interesting life, and very lively, constantly something fresh, and I quite believe that it is also spiritually alive. I should be extremely sorry to exchange it for anything anywhere. Bartimeus has found out a new way of preaching to the Maga people, and though it may cause offence and opposition, I think it will work well. Only one man here, Dja Dagang, has consented to work for us at the proper wages. He is a middle-aged man, very industrious, and quite a friend, but he has to bear some scoffing from the others, who have only two aims, little work and high wages, and of course we will have nothing to say to them. But Bartimeus has found in Malintang three lads, one the son of the high priest, who are quite glad to walk over, twenty-five miles, to work here at our usual wages. By dint of walking on Sunday night they arrived in time to work for us all six days. Yesterday, Saturday, they went home, but mean to begin again with us on Tuesday. They too, I think, have met rather a rough reception in our market village, and are glad to sleep here, buying their own rice and cooking it in our kitchen. This is all clearly the fruit of our seven months in Malintang, and will force the Maga people to respect Christianity, and to acknowledge its power to draw and subdue by love, which casts out fear and antagonism.

Jan. 27.—The three lads faithfully returned yesterday, the high priest's son bringing, for the second time, from his mother something nice which she had made for us to

eat, and his father and mother are taking it in turn to watch over and nurse the sick baby of Seman, our Christian helper there, and to comfort Mrs. Seman.

Already two Maga people have offered to work for us and been accepted, urged on, of course, by the sight of the Malintang youths—a man yesterday, and our terribly idle widow to-day, who for the last week has been saying, 'I will come to-morrow'; and there is work for all, for we are reducing a piece of waste land to cultivation. Then there are outbuildings to erect, trees to cut down, and a small coffee plantation to make. Bartimeus is a capital hand at finding employment for each, and keeping them at it; but to-day he is gone, before I was up, with one of the youths on an evangelization tour, to a very poor down-trodden tribe, who have been much on my mind and on his.

You will wonder at the coffee plantation, but it is almost a necessity. Coffee is a Government monopoly, and no one is allowed to buy it from the natives. The controlleur has allowed us to buy it here from the sultan's nephew, Dimara, but he takes care to make it so dear, that the best plan is to plant enough for our own use, which will also specially benefit our successors in the work, and they are naturally my chief consideration. In a land with no milk, no tea, no cocoa, and rather indifferent water, one has to think of something to drink, and often in Malintang we were reduced to spurious coffee, made of roasted rice or Indian corn, or made from the leaves of the coffee trees.

Jan. 30.—Another great interest and pleasure is the preparation of our guest-room for the unknown successor who may be coming [1].

[1] It may be well to explain that Miss Needham applied for helpers for mission work in Mandailing, from Barmen, from the Methodist Episcopal Mission in Singapore, from the Bible Society, and from a Dutch Baptist Missionary Society—all in vain. Her spiritual life had been greatly influenced many years before by the teaching of Mrs. Booth, and she now

Now please not to make a mistake, and imagine that I am expecting an angel from heaven; so far from that, I am anticipating a possible thorn in the flesh; the joy lies in the hope that this will prove the beginning of the end, a gradual rolling upon others the responsibility of the work.

Jan. 31.—At this moment we have the extreme pleasure of a visit from Mr. Nikkel; it has been a long promise, and at last he was able to get away. So, as is fitting, he is the first to use the guest-room. This visit is also like the beginning of the end, as he has brought with him the covenant paper, to be signed by the sultan and Bartimeus, securing the use of these premises to him and his successors in the work. Then we are looking forward to receiving the Holy Communion this evening.

Feb. 5.—Yes, it was a pleasure indeed, that visit from Saturday to Monday morning early. On Saturday evening we discussed the wording of the transfer deed, just we Christians, but it was a long business, as Battas love talking, and it made our prayer-meeting very late. On Sunday, before breakfast, they went off to the sultan with the rough copy, to repeat the process there. That seemed interminable, though he agreed to all, only saying it would be well to measure the premises and record it, which we were equally glad to do.

After a very late breakfast came church service. That was barely over when the sultan arrived with many of his people, and there was an immensely long séance, while the land was being measured with a rod, and Mr. Nikkel's head teacher, Jonathan, was writing out two fair copies of the deed, one on Government paper, and one for us on common paper, and we were having coffee and bananas.

My name does not appear, as there is rather a fear of

sought help from the Salvation Army, hoping that they might provide a successor to carry on the work when she should be called to lay it down; but no one has gone

English people and foreigners, so I thought it best to have Bartimeus' name alone used, as being a harmless native. The point to be secured by the sultan was that the land was only borrowed, and must not be sold, and if we went away and ceased to use it, it should return to him, and of course we were quite willing. Our own point was that the land should not be taken from us, and that we had power to make what use of it we thought fit, either Bartimeus or his successors in the work, and, wonderful to say, they agreed willingly.

If my vocation has been to open the door in Mandailing for missionaries to enter in, the work is now accomplished in black and white, only we have not yet the Government permission to call ourselves missionaries and to 'compel them to come in.' It is still the work of simply witnessing, and that is all that I personally am able to do, but I can leave that second part of the work with the most perfect confidence.

The sultan and Bartimeus each signed both the deeds, and so did the six witnesses.

Cigarettes had then to be smoked and hands shaken, and at last they went away, and we had dinner.

In the evening, such a contrast! A little, low, white-covered table (my stool) with bread and wine, also covered with a white cloth, all six of us sitting on the mat, or lying around it, and there, in the most perfect stillness and quiet, we had our Communion feast.

The next morning, after an early cup of coffee with me in my bedroom, and a prayer, our good brother went on his way, doing the thirty-four miles in one day. I think I may say that was the sweetest and simplest Lord's Supper I ever had the pleasure of partaking. It is indeed a privilege to have found such a brother, humble, cheerful, patient, ever at work for others.

Feb. 12.—I should say the wickedness here is rather

worse than in Malintang, and the need of a real Christianity still more pressing, if possible.

Feb. 23.—I have been trying a course of bedroom quietness, but such a grand fortnight it has been, as I always came into this general room for two out of our four readings daily, and have had the intense delight in that time, by careful selection, of reading through the Gospel story, from the angel's visit to Mary, to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, in the presence—I think I may say the willing presence—of a young man named Komedi, of course a Mohammedan. He is one of Bartimeus' Malintang friends, and when Bartimeus went there for his second monthly visit to pay the salary of the caretaker of our house, he brought this young man back with him, and he has been working as a day labourer all the time. Komedi, though it is just now the Mohammedan fasting month, is not ashamed to be seen by all outsiders eating with us, and worshipping with us; but he makes no profession, and we have asked him for none, except that this morning, as he wished me good-bye before returning home, I said, 'Supposing you have found a treasure here, do not be ashamed to confess it at home, and do not be afraid of the talk and ridicule of your companions.' His brother, who keeps the watermill in Malintang, is a special friend of Bartimeus.

We have left some good friends behind us there, at any rate for six months, and this gives much pleasure and interest to Bartimeus' monthly visits there, notwithstanding the shady side of the work. Last time he went on to a place five miles north, and was really fallen upon and attacked by three friendly village chiefs living further north again, in Si-epeng or its neighbourhood: 'Why won't you set up a house with us? We want you to come. Why is it to be only at Malintang and Maga that you live? As to a house in our neighbourhood there is no difficulty

whatever; the chief So-and-so has a good wooden house, and he would sell it to you at once.'

These are people who I believe are not in the smallest degree seeking Christianity, nor have they the faintest intention of receiving it; but still it is no small thing to see, like this, doors opening for us everywhere, and it would be almost absurd to expect them to be differently minded before they become thoroughly acquainted with us, when all their teaching and prejudices have been in favour of Mahomet.

Priscilla and Stacey continue as fascinating as ever. Both at Malintang and here they began and have continued the practice, entirely out of their own heads, of bringing me specimen flowers—always new ones as far as possible, to my great delight—so that I am really getting an insight into the great flower land. I thought at first at Malintang that there was hardly a flower growing in all the neighbourhood, but by degrees the great variety of beauty has been revealed to me.

Just now I am busy teaching Bartimeus English, because supposing I die before my successor comes, all would be utter confusion; and even if I do not, it would be confusion enough if he knew nothing, as they will always have to go out together on their wanderings, learning, as I believe and trust, very much from each other. He is very intelligent, learns one short, 'generally useful' sentence each day, and can now repeat about eighteen, beginning with that most useful one of all: 'What is that in English?' enabling him to understand in return if the other one says, 'What is that in Batak?' This will at once lead them out into a wide field of mutual learning; and meanwhile I teach as far as possible what cannot be described, seen, or touched, and what will help him in the construction of sentences, such as 'To-morrow is market day in Si-Habu,' 'He is not yet come,' &c., &c. It is a very interesting work.

March 7.—Yesterday was the sultan's reception day, when offerings were expected, and I was particularly glad of the opportunity to do my part handsomely in the matter, in the shape of a goat, though I had no idea that such handsomeness, at any rate in little Maga, was unexampled!

Our faithful workman, Dagang, brought it the evening before, and as etiquette is one of the false gods worshipped by this people, everything must follow its laws; so yesterday, after an early breakfast, every one prepared to go to the reception, except old Musa and myself. The goat, led by Dagang, had to go first, and I was just a little bit vexed that I was the only person in the house that had not seen the wonderful creature, when they might just as well have brought it to the window for a minute; however, that passed off. At a respectful distance behind, followed three cocoa-nuts and three measures of rice, the proper etiquette fixings for a goat. though, for a fowl, one measure of rice is the correct amount.

Bartimeus and his family all went, meeting there, and dining with, eight hadjis and one sheikh, and Bartimeus was actually invited to preach by the sultan, which he did at full length, pouring out all his soul, and his words were received with, at any rate, outward respect and assent, and condemnation of their own religion in favour of ours; and the sultan scolded the hadjis for not having called on us, and said that he himself was filled with deep thoughts of admiration and wonder, when he considered our small numbers and weak bodies, and continued perseverance, and that it would be well for all to lay to heart the things that had been spoken.

This was going much further than at our feast in January, when he was content to put all religions on an equal footing, including cannibalism. The goat evidently made a great impression, and he asked how it was that we

Christians showed him such love, when he had done nothing to deserve it. His nephew Dimara was there too, with both his wives, each with a wounded head, the work of their husband. So such is the man with the fair show of words! Of course there were plenty of other people besides.

Being left in peace and quietness, I took the opportunity of writing a kind of 'winding-up' letter to Commandant Herbert Booth. You see, dropsy having set in, in my feet, since the middle of January, and gradually creeping upwards, there is no knowing how soon it may become the chariot to take me home; so I poured out my heart to him, because I felt I could trust him—about the dropsy, and Bartimeus' precarious health, and my wish to complete the chain of four houses from north to south of Mandailing, only two being as yet complete; to have an experienced Christian worker in each, living with a native evangelist and his family, to do the cooking, mind the house, teach the language, and fill up the preaching, which must needs be most halting the first year. That I have engaged a Barmen Mission native evangelist, and am hoping to engage another, these two, also Bartimeus, having had secured one year's salary each from the time of my death (only Bartimeus much longer).

Having finished my letter, and had a long resting time after it, at last came our dinner, which the sultan had undertaken to send. I looked at my plate of rice, and lo, by its side, was my goat come back to me, or at any rate part of it! It seemed as if I could hear a voice saying, 'My dear child, certainly you shall see the goat if you like, only I think it will be nicer to have it killed and cooked first!' To which I quite agreed, as it was very nice. In this way, or rather in utterly different ways, does my ever present Father constantly more than gratify my smallest fancies, and Jesus is strong enough to give me the necessary victory first.

The Bartimeus family came back late in the afternoon—he full of joy at his fresh opportunities, and most exceedingly rejoicing when I told him of the letter, as the good man had been feeling a little oppressed with the 'doubtful' prospect of the work getting its root firmly planted. As for me, I have not the shadow of a care.

This morning I again looked at my plate of rice, and behold the last 'beloved remains' of the late goat! I was astounded to think what that goat had accomplished. I had no idea they would have killed it there and then; but, on the contrary, that was the only thing they did kill, and with no vegetables, that I am conscious of, to help it out, no fish, no pudding, no fruit—simply and only rice and goat.

March 10.—My arms are like sticks, and my legs like pillars. Shall I not be glad when the proportion gets right, and I may fly away home, though according to my present feelings I should prefer to be carried rather than have the exertion of flying? Bartimeus too gets so ill and prostrate; since his flourish in the sultan's house he has been just good for nothing, poor man! He has always his blindness and consumption, and then come other things, like intermittent fever; just as I have my two foundations of spine and dropsy, and relays of the other things on occasion. So it is a regular race between us, and I expect the winner will be the one who is most willing to hang on here for the further fixing of the work; but I cannot help also believing that we shall both win in this race.

Another grand winding-up work I got through yesterday, i.e. writing a long English letter, to be given to the first Salvation Army officer who arrives here, and saying much the same as in my other letter. Another work lies before me, which is to write out an extremely mild and defective dictionary, both Batak and English, for him to find on his arrival—just the words I happen to think of and the

most commonly used; and supposing I get no further than *D*, it will have done no harm.

Of Martha I see hardly anything nowadays, except at mealtimes; the kitchen being a separate building partly accounts for this, but she still washes my bits of things once a week, and cooks. Moses is quite a handful in himself, toddling or falling into all sorts of scrapes. Hinsa is my personal attendant, and, as far as her ability goes, does the work very well, not having to be for ever reminded of things, but really thinking and caring. If she pulls through all that is laid upon her, she will be a grand character, and I believe she is pulling, but steadfastness is the characteristic want among the Bataks, so one can never tell.

March 20.—The dictionary is supremely interesting, and to my great surprise and delight all the necessary *A*'s are already got through, with an illustrative sentence to each word; and before entering in among the *B*'s I have begun a grammar, also of engrossing interest, and perhaps even more necessary; while Bartimeus, who is up and about again, is busy superintending the workmen (always himself also working) who are putting the finishing touches to our premises outside.

People have not given up coming to the window to have a look and a talk, or rather to stand silent and hear the glorious Gospel of Love and Peace, and when at the end I say, 'Now you tell me some of the beautiful things of your own religion,' invariably they have nothing whatever to tell; so I suggest that if their tree is so utterly fruitless, the sooner it is cut down the better!

I have just engaged a first-rate evangelist from Sipirok, to come with his family to live in our third little house. He is a great friend of Bartimeus, and also a friend of our other evangelist at Malintang, so it is very promising. To these there will be secured a year's salary.

Never could I have believed that under all the various circumstances around us, which are by no means all white, but decidedly speckled, I could have enjoyed such absolutely indescribable joy and peace as I now do, I may say, increasingly week by week.

Less than a month now to April 11, which eight years ago was on a Thursday, when God's clear call came, and on Saturday the 13th was a Princess House Committee, and I was obliged to confess before Miss F. and Colonel B. that I had pledged myself to go to some place in Sumatra, the name of which I did not know, and did not know how to obtain; my knowledge of Sumatra itself being only this, that there were tigers in the middle and Dutch settlements all round!

Maga, April.—What you say about Esther is very nice, but you are mistaken about the facts, and about the motive which prevented my receiving her back; also you do not know the characters of the people concerned as I do; neither do you know what it would be to fall under the power of an undisciplined heathen man, who would come and stay in your house as if it were his own; and would keep raising his terms of permission for Esther to stay on, according to his want of money at the time. Even now I can hardly think without shuddering of that four days' visit of Paga and his companions; the close contact with the depths of evil was to me so dreadful, as to show me clearly that it is not my vocation to be a missionary, one who loves to seek and to save the foulest, and must therefore necessarily love that foul one with deepest Christ-like love. For this reason I suppose I am no real missionary, and never have been, but it is clearly my vocation to be a hewer of wood and drawer of water to others who I trust are real missionaries. So I build wooden houses, and make drains and wells round them;

and because I can do this, and many other people cannot, therefore am I sent no doubt, and God will accept the little poor work done so badly, and which ought to have been and might have been at the same time such a glorious mission work, and He will forgive and cast out the bushels of chaff, and will accept the one or two grains of wheat for His dear Son's sake.

April 1.—The dropsy is now in my hands and face, although it never reached my knees. Now, supposing I find myself unable to write, I will try to send a sign from Sunday to Sunday, cutting up the Y.W.C.A. Almanac for the purpose. For every Sunday that I enclose you will know that I was then alive, and you must take for granted that God is true to His Word, and will 'never leave nor forsake' me, but will make all my bed in my sickness, as He has done up till to-day. I am so thankful that Mr. Nikkel means to come over here next Tuesday, although he does not know that I am worse, as I have a good deal to say to him.

Now, first, as to the joy of going. It will be simply beautiful, and I should so like you all to make a feast of rejoicing when you hear of it; not necessarily an eating and drinking feast—though if it could be that to any poor dropsical sisters or brothers, that would be nice indeed—but a feast of rejoicing, singing, thanksgiving, and praise. Then, as to the joy of remaining. I can only thank God for each day that I remain alive *for the work's sake.*

For instance, yesterday—we have passed through deep waters at Malintang, and Bartimeus had to go for two nights to discharge Djaondolan from his stewardship, as alas! he has not proved faithful, and to appoint his successor, Madjid, the son of the high priest, who is to live in the new little house in the garden, while the two evangelists, Seman and Masuk, with their families are to live together for the present in the large house.

All this work was accomplished in the two nights. Bartimeus returned yesterday, and that same evening I added the name of Madjid to those who are entitled to a year's salary when I die. Mr. Nikkel has the money, and will see to it all, so that is not a small thing to have accomplished by the stroke of a pen.

The English and Batak Grammar is nearly finished; with the dictionary I am not yet quite through the *B*'s, but this thing is certain; God will not take me till the work He has given me to do is finished, however otherwise it may appear to people. To-day's work is this letter.

April 2.—Oh, it is all just beautiful. I cannot tell you exactly *what*, but everything in general, and the wonderful way in which all things seem to be dropping into their right places. Bartimeus, for instance, is now provided with an experienced, loving brother in the middle-aged Masuk, who was his friend fifteen years ago, and for two years lately the evangelist and director of the Leper Home in Sipirok; so if such a home is set up here, he would be an invaluable adviser, and probably the director of it; and everything in Malintang is like more than an answer to prayer.

Now will you think me quite mad, if I tell you that I have ordered a wedding-cake from England, or if it turns out more like a Twelfth cake it must at least do service as a wedding one? This through Mrs. C. W.'s kindness, and accompanied by various tinned soups, meats, &c., and water biscuits, and I am looking forward with the greatest pleasure to the very distant arrival of the box. You see, I look at it in this way—Suppose it comes too late for me personally, these tinned things may prove invaluable to our never-to-be-forgotten successors in their first struggles to accommodate themselves to native diet, and the wedding-cake will make for the children here (and at Malintang and Pakanten) a most lovely feast with a meaning, i. e. the

bride joined to the Bridegroom, and will help to make the enjoyment of heaven more real to their perhaps rather earthly minds; and I have told Bartimeus all about it, even to the number of the hymn about the Bridegroom.

April 6.—I seemed to be getting so far on the road that I had better secure Bartimeus' and my special wish, while the mind was yet fairly clear, and have our final prayer-meeting on Saturday evening. So the three elders, with the addition of Hinsa, came in and knelt by the bed: so I had the pleasure of thanking God and praying for each by name, holding Bartimeus' right hand while I prayed for him, and indeed he is truly my right hand. There was no left hand to the bed, only a wall, and my very real left hand, Esther, was also not there, but she was not left out of her proper place.

Having eaten hardly a scrap for five days, and feeling not the slightest inclination to do so, I expected to get weaker in the night, but got stronger instead, and am eating again fairly now! Well, I am very grateful indeed to all of you, good sisters; who are pulling me through everything with your prayers; and I heard to-day of an old man whose whole body was fearfully and tremendously swollen with dropsy, and who was ill two years, and then it gradually dispersed of itself, and he is now quite well! So there's no knowing what may happen.

Yesterday we had a great surprise. At dinner-time arrived Mr. Wiebe and his little girl from Sipongi, come to stay the night. I am most thankful it was not to-day he came, when we are expecting Mr. Nikkel.

April 10.—He is come and gone, after staying two nights, and henceforth there is to be weekly communication between here and Pakanten. What that visit was, no words can describe; not only the brotherly Christian intercourse of those who are one in Christ, and in aim and in method, but the vitally important business matters

which had to be settled. He had felt urged to come, though he had no idea how ill I was. It is dysentery, I suppose, and Bartimeus sleeps outside my door, and attends to me all through the night. Now he has sent for the good Masuk, the elder of the two evangelists at Malintang, and a teacher is also come from Pakanten. Women are no good. Now once more love to all, and very likely even now I may pull through.

April 13.—I am still here, and as the water has not yet returned to my hands, I suppose I ought to write while I can. It is clear enough that my life is still needed, as it seems I must make a legal will of whatever goods and money are *here*, or coming here, else there will be a mess. Of course Mr. Nikkel takes all the trouble, but it will be an expensive business, as the lawyer must be sent for in all haste from Sidempuan. Masuk arrived on Saturday night, and he and Bartimeus look after me splendidly. A trusted messenger from Pakanten arrived on Sunday afternoon, bringing potatoes, lemons, a ripe orange, and a letter. People are so kind. Mr. Nikkel has been scouring all the country for potatoes, being almost the only thing I can eat, and Bartimeus managed to get two young doves, the meat and broth of which are excellent. Boiled potatoes, onions, and dove soup, or fried potatoes, onions, and lemonade - you could not find better than that in London! So the dear, kind Lord cares for the *bodies* of those on the battlefield, and I have no longing *at all* for the constant presence of a European; indeed, the hoped-for visit from the Irles will probably now be shortened to a single night, as I cannot bear the slightest excitement or talking. Yours in perfect peace,

HESTER NEEDHAM.

Easter Sunday, April 18, 1897.—It does seem indeed almost a miracle that the prayers in England and Pakanten

and Silindung (as I believe) are snatching me back again for a while from the Golden Gates, as has happened so often with Bartimeus; and it is good, and a *great* pleasure to see my varied thoughts in preparation for the coming ones fulfilled one by one. The new planks being now seasoned, a good carpenter, and Maga man, has been engaged, and has just finished putting a ceiling to the two other bedrooms, also providing us, in this way, with a strong open loft, into which have been hoisted the wheel-bed and my day bed, making me feel already half out of the way, and of course greatly improving and enlarging the space in the general room, where they both had their abiding place. This has allowed room at last to put up some book-shelves, immensely needed, where Testaments, hymn books, &c., are constantly being required.

I only wish I could see it all by just peeping in for a moment. Shelves finished yesterday.

That dear old sultan has been twice to see me. . . .

April 21.—. . . And we held each other's hands and looked into each other's faces, and I told him of the One Mediator provided by the Father for the forgiveness of sins. Why should we reject His costly provision and seek other methods of our own, such as water-washings, a month's fast, or anything else which would not avail? And I said to him, 'You yourself asked me to come forty or fifty years ago; now at last we have come, and I do so long that the abiding peace and joy which we ourselves have received from God may be yours too'; and he said, 'May He write on my heart all the teaching of the lady, that I may take it in!' That dear, dear old man! he does so want me not to die, and the report is already spread abroad in Malintang that he is becoming a Christian. I should not myself, however, feel justified in confirming this report.

April 24.—To-day the Government secretary and others came, and Brother Nikkel, and the will is now formally

written out, signed, sealed, and delivered, thank God! but it has nearly killed me.

April 30.—To-morrow is post. Mrs. Dixon has written. Uncle Bernard[1] is gone home. Cannot write. *Love, sympathy, prayers* for the poor young, desolate, childless widow.

The Irles came on the 27th for two nights; Mr. Wiebe, 28th, to fetch them. Kindness of the Nikkels untold. Sent cow and calf yesterday that I might have milk, *so nice*. Three take turns at night, Bartimeus, Masuk, and a Christian from Pakanten. Can no longer get out of bed. Have only to pull a tape. Washerman comes every morning, and brings all back same afternoon. *Food*, strong chicken broth, arrowroot, &c., but very little at a time. Every one so kind. Have all and abound.

Two letters received from you. Best love to all and Miss Johnson. I *may* pull through yet!

Thankful to stay, but delighted to go.

POSTCARD FROM MR. NIKKEL.

Pakanten, Sumatra, May 25, 1897.

DEAR MISS,—This is to inform you that Miss Needham went home on May 12, 1897. She was happy here, but was glad to go. She sent her love to her friends in England. A large letter is following. I am yours sincerely,

G. NIKKEL.

LETTER FROM MRS. NIKKEL.

Pakanten, Sumatra, May 25, 1897.

DEAR MISS ENFIELD,—Although we do not know each other, I feel obliged to write you, as a grievous duty calls me. Our dear friend, Miss Needham, is, May 12 morning, at seven o'clock, gone to her Lord and Saviour. He called her, who was His dear child, from her sick bed, where she was suffering much, and we are glad for her that now she is not suffering, more, although we feel her

[1] The Rev. B. Bosanquet of Folkestone.

loss deeply, as we loved and respected her so very much. She desired to die; she longed to return home to her Father in heaven, and we are thankful that the Lord has fulfilled her wish, and has shortened her sick bed.

Two months ago, as she felt very weakly (her last illness was dropsy), she ordered all her affairs so calmly and quietly, as one who is at the end of her journey, and will leave the quarters in which she has dwelt till now.

It moved our heart, as we saw and heard her doing so. She sent to me a few photographs of her friends, between which also a photograph of you. I think she did not like to leave them in Maga, and could not reconcile to her mind to destroy them, as they were the dear portraits of her relations and friends. I have kept them carefully, and they ever will be to me a dear souvenir of her.

My husband saw her the last time on April 27; at that date she was not yet so very ill, she could at least move from her bed. As he returned we still send her a cow with a very young calf, in order she could get and drink the milk. We have pitied it so very much that we could not earlier send a milch cow, but we had even too little milk for our baby. The last three days of her life she only drank milk, that was her only nourishment.

As we heard that she got iller, my husband would go to Maga, but could not go immediately, as Mr. and Mrs. Irle had visited us. May 13 they would depart, and then my husband intended to set out for Maga. But May 12 evening a young Patta of our congregation, who was in Maga in order to help the dear sister, came and brought us the grievous information that Sister Needham had got home the same morning.

The next morning my husband went off with many Christians of our congregation, and they buried her in the garden, close to her house. Miss Needham's dear friends in England will be very distressed to hear of her dying

so lonely in a strange country, among a strange people, but just *this* was her wish. And also this, that no one should mourn for her.

We mourn, however, as we loved her dearly as a sister.

With Christian regards, Yours,

A. C. NIKKEL-KNIPERS.'

The news that Hester Needham was 'at rest' reached England on Monday, June 28, and, in accordance with her spirit and her wish, an invitation was sent to about thirty of those who had learned to know her chiefly through her letters, to meet for an hour on the following Saturday afternoon, that they might hear what they could of her last weeks, and join in giving thanks for her life, and for her entrance into rest.

It was as she wished, 'a feast of rejoicing, thanksgiving, and prayer,' but the food which was there was not for those who were invited, but was to be taken by them to the sick and suffering.

The room was made bridal for the meeting, with tiny bouquets of white flowers and ferns, and white parcels of groceries for distribution, tied with white ribbons. The meeting began with a hymn. Then the last letters were read, interspersed with hymns and praise and prayer, and after joining in the Doxology, each one left with a nosegay and a parcel to give to some needy sister, and with a little card bearing these words :—

'GOD FIRST.'

H. N.

Born Jan. 23, 1843.
'Went Home,' May 12, 1897.

'Thankful to stay, but
Delighted to go.'

The following extracts may be of interest:—

From Sister Thora.

Pea Radja, Sept. 15, 1892.—Miss Needham told me that some of her relatives were anxious about her, and would not believe her to be happy; and so I think you will be glad to have some particulars from one who sees her often. It is true that she is rather lonely; she lives alone in her Princess House, but two boys sleep in the kitchen, and can be at hand, if anything should happen.

After the earthquake of May 17 Miss Needham was very ill, and suffered great pain; yet she soon got better; and though she is still obliged to stay in bed, she is able to do all her work. The company of her Batta women is the best medicine, she says, and she does not want any other. I once asked whether she did not sometimes long for death. 'No,' said she; 'I have got much to do yet, and the Lord is always here. Many times in the day I say, "Oh, I am so happy."' I do not believe that many sick persons at home, though surrounded with all the luxuries of life, would be able to say the same thing. So, you see, Miss Needham is rather to be envied than pitied. The Battas of course love her very much, and once a woman said of her, *Hira so djolma* ('She is no more human'). Then you must remember that it is nothing so dreadful to live with the Battas only; many of them are really quite charming people, and Miss Needham is very fond of her Katerina, and of little Benoni, a dwarf of fourteen years, who does his best to perform all his duties. He is a nice boy, a true little Christian. . . .

Also from Sister Thora.

Barmen, August, 1897.—. . . As to my impressions of Miss Needham, they are soon told. I think her own

words are the best, 'I am a volcano covered with snow.' Her bearing, queenly—of an almost appalling dignity—never suffering any one to go one step beyond the line she herself had drawn, yet filled with a love that delighted to spend and to be spent. That love for the Battas was the ruling motive in her life when I knew her. She was—I don't know the right expression—'devoured,' would convey the sense of what I mean, by it. She exercised a great authority over the natives, whose reverence for her was striking. Those poor dear weak people felt that Miss Needham spoke and lived in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, and they yielded before her wonderful personality.

Very seldom I think you would find such a heart, such a brain, and such a mighty will in one person. No wonder that she should be a chosen instrument, and we shall see by-and-by what God has wrought through her.

In a short notice of her life, Mr. Johannsen wrote: '. . . In May, 1891, we set to work and translated the Old Testament into Batak. Miss Needham gave 3,600 florins for the printing costs. What she has done in Pansur-na-pitu, in Sipoholon, in Muara Sipongi, in Malintang, and Maga, is written in the book of remembrance of the Lord. It may be said truly of her too: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."'

With regard to some of those with whose names the reader has become familiar, the following extracts may be of interest:—

Sister Thora, after her return to Sumatra, writes from Toba, November, 1897: '. . . On November 3 we had a pleasant ride from Siboga up country, and were received with much kindness in my old home, Pea Radja, where I saw Miss

Needham's *Esther*. She is now helping in their Infants' Home, and proving a very valuable help indeed, so that her life with Miss Needham has not been in vain.

'I passed one day and night in *Sipoholon*, and learned to know and love Miss Emily Dutton. She and *Sister Kate* are still working there. It was very strange to be in the same rooms where I have so often listened to Miss N.'s solemn words. It seemed as if her spirit must still be there in our midst. She is in glory, and we are on earth, and we shall have to toil on for a little while.'

On March 16, 1898, Sister Kate writes to tell the news of *Mr. Johannsen's* sudden death on January 11, 1898, after thirty-two years of devoted work as a missionary in Sumatra. The native Christians were filled with sorrow; they said, 'We are very sad, we have lost our father.'

Sister Kate also says: 'Some weeks ago I heard from *Bartimeus*; they were all well, and would like us to go there.'

'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

'He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

'If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour.'—JOHN xii. 24–26.

'PRAISE GOD, FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW.'